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**A Survey of the Sources of Information that Influence
Adolescents' knowledge and Attitudes about
Sex and Dating Relationships**

by

Laura Park

Honours Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Wilfrid Laurier University, 1993

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the Master of Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

1995

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Abstract

This study was an initial attempt to understand the impact of parents, peers, the media, and sex education curricula on shaping adolescents' knowledge and attitudes about dating relationships and sexuality. In addition, participants' descriptions of what constitutes a "good" date and a "bad" date were investigated. One hundred participants (48 females, 52 males) aged thirteen to sixteen participated: half of the sample were early adolescents (13-14 years) and the other half were middle adolescents (15-16 years). All participants were asked to describe experienced or hypothetical "good" and "bad" dates. For "good" dates, respondents identified engaging in fun, recreational activities, whereas "bad" dates were defined by the absence of such activities. In addition, gender differences were found with regard to the importance and validity that participants placed on parents, peers, media, and sex education as sources of dating information. With respect to the amount of information provided by each source, females received more information than males from music videos. Females also rated parents and television as more accurate sources of dating information than did males. With respect to the influence of each source on participants' choice of dating partner, females rated parents, peers, and television as greater sources of influence on their choice of dating partner than did males. Lastly, females perceived more pressure to date from peers and television than males, and believed that they shared more similar attitudes and values about dating with their peers than males. An examination of the relative impact of each of the external sources revealed that males believed that dating partners were a source of information that was easy to access, comfortable, and provided the most accurate information about dating and sexuality issues. In conclusion, females credited external sources of information (e.g. parents, peers, and television) as sources of dating information whereas males credited dating partners (a non-threatening source) as sources of dating information.

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A Survey of the Sources of Information that Influence
Adolescent's Knowledge and Attitudes about
Sex and Dating Relationships

Dating is a common and expected social activity for most adults in Western societies. Many adults find that dating provides them with an opportunity for friendship, intimacy, and enhanced self-esteem (McDaniel, 1969; Peplau, Rubin, & Hill, 1977). On the other hand, the dating environment can also lead to negative outcomes including violence and rape (Kanin, 1984; Muehlenhard, 1988). Many of the perceptions and attitudes, and much of the knowledge of adult daters concerning dating interaction are derived from their personal experiences or the information they receive from their peers who are also engaged in relationships (Pryor & Merluzzi, 1985). As dating relationships become increasingly more prevalent for adolescent and preadolescent populations (Elkind, 1981; Postman, 1985), research has focused on the sources of information used to shape young people's knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes on this subject. It is suspected that young adolescents use the information provided by a variety of sources (e.g., peers, parents, media) to shape their beliefs about dating and relationships. Despite lack of experience, young adolescents who are either just entering dating relationships, or who have not yet dated, appear to have some knowledge and attitudes about this type of interaction (Jackson, 1975; Roscoe, Diana, & Brooks, 1987).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the sources of early and middle adolescents' knowledge about dating, the perceived validity of the information they have

received, and the value that they place on these sources of information. This paper will begin with an overview of adolescents' perceptions of dating, its functions, and expectations of dating partners' behaviour. The types of information sources available to young people on the subjects of sex and dating relationships will also be reviewed. The relative influence of parents, peers, the media (television, music videos, theatre and rented films), and school (sex education curricula and teachers) will be discussed in depth as it relates to early (13-14) and middle (15-16) adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of dating and relationships.

Adolescent Dating: Functions, Perceptions, and Expectations

Traditionally, early adolescents have received little research attention in terms of understanding their perceptions of dating and sexuality. Hence most of our beliefs concerning teen dating behaviours are based on adult findings. Teenagers' increasing participation in dating interactions, however, has prompted interest from both educators and researchers (Feltey, Ainslie, & Geib, 1991; Jackson, 1975; Roscoe et al., 1987). Adolescents' knowledge and perceptions of the functions and activities of dating have been examined, with responses varying as a function of gender and developmental stage. For example, Jackson (1975) found gender-divergent responses for perspectives regarding dating and expected dating behaviours among non-dating adolescents. Eleven and twelve year-old girls reported dating as an opportunity to engage in recreational activities, whereas boys

perceived dating as a means of achieving independence. Interestingly, few participants perceived dating as an opportunity for personal interaction.

Roscoe et al. (1987) investigated perceptions of dating among early (13-14), middle (15-16) and late (17-18) adolescents. They also found that early adolescents perceived dating to be a recreational activity and did not identify social interaction as a reason for dating. Further analyses revealed significant differences between males and females at the early, middle, and late adolescent stages with respect to the functions of dating. Middle adolescents perceived the functions of dating to include recreation and status. Late adolescents, however, reported companionship, sexual activity, and mate selection as functions of dating. In addition, late adolescent males more readily reported that sexual activity was a dating function than did females. Descriptions of the personal characteristics of potential dating partners were superficial (based on physical attractiveness), focusing on status seeking, in early adolescence (Roscoe et al., 1987). Middle and late adolescents were more interested in mate-selection and long-term commitment when choosing dating partners. Late male adolescents were more likely to describe physical attractiveness and sexual activity as traits desired in a partner, whereas females cited personality and behaviour traits as important.

Late adolescents' and adults' expectations of how the opposite sex should behave within a dating relationship were investigated by Collins, Kennedy, and Francis (1976). Undergraduate university students, ranging in age from 17-30, completed an anonymous questionnaire. Males and females reported similar expectations for the first date. However,

males expected females to be much more sexually interactive following the first date. This finding was consistent for males in the study regardless of their age. Young females, however, had different perceptions about sexual activity than their older peers. Women aged 17-19 expected the males to be far less sexually persuasive. This finding suggests that males and females, particularly in the 17-19 age group, maintain different expectations of sexual activity in their behaviour in dating relationships. This gender difference may lead to problems in dating interaction.

Adolescent sexual intimacy has been reported to be a reality for many adolescents (Collins et al., 1976; Ostrov, Offer, Howard, Kaufman, & Meyer, 1985). At issue, however, is whether sexual intimacy is a component of adolescent dating experiences, how often it occurs, and under what circumstances. Ostrov et al. (1985) tested the sexual attitudes and behaviours of American high school students. Fifty-four per cent of boys and 37% of girls reported engaging in sexual intercourse by age seventeen. A closer look at dating behaviour revealed that boys who had had more than one dating partner were more likely to be engaging in sexual activity. Girls who were steady daters were no more likely to engage in sexual activity than girls who had more than one dating partner. In addition, those students who performed at average or below academic standards were more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse than those students who were high achievers. Surprisingly, many students demonstrated little knowledge of birth control or of venereal diseases. The results of this study indicate that sexual activity is a reality for adolescents, but that it occurs with a lack of basic and essential knowledge about sex and relationships.

Information Sources: Factors Influencing Knowledge and Attitudes

It appears that the concept of dating matures from a recreational activity to an opportunity for fulfilling intimacy and social interaction needs. The factors which influence this developmental change have not been thoroughly investigated. It is clear that a number of external factors such as parents, peers, the media, and school curriculum influence adolescents' knowledge and attitudes concerning dating and sexuality (Berger, Simon, & Gagnon, 1973; DePietro, & Clark, 1984; Treboux & Busch-Rossnagel, 1990; Shamaï & Coombs, 1992), but the relative impact of these variables has not been determined as yet.

A small body of literature exists concerning the types of information sources about sex that are available to young people. For example, Gebhard (1977) found that children and adolescents are learning facts about sex and relationships at considerably younger ages than their parents and grandparents did, as a result of three factors: increased parental effort to impart information, increased sex education in schools, and greater and more explicit treatment of sex in the media. A study by Tjaden (1988) found that friends ranked first as the source of information about dating and sexuality among boys and girls in North America. Among girls, mothers ranked second, and school third, while among boys school ranked second, and fathers, third.

Similar findings were reported by Duncan and Nicholson (1991). These authors found that when late adolescents were asked to rank seven sources of information as contributors to knowledge about sex, both genders ranked friends as the most important source of sex information: books ranked second, media third, parents fourth, and school

fifth. Males ranked pornography as sixth and church last. Females, however, ranked church sixth and pornography last. Clearly, a variety of sources of sex information exist, as do some gender differences in young people's choices of these sources.

The present study was designed to examine the sources of information which influence early and middle adolescents' behaviour, attitudes, and knowledge about dating relationships. Specifically, this study will examine the relative influence of parents, peers, media, and sex education on adolescents' knowledge about dating and sexuality and their preference for these sources. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the growing body of literature aimed at identifying sources of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours which predict and/or promote positive dating outcomes.

Parents as Sources of Information

Parents are an important source of information about sexuality and relationships, especially for preadolescents and early adolescents (Baldwin & Baranoski, 1990). The following section of this review discusses evidence relating to this factor.

Researchers have long been aware of the family's impact on children's developing sexuality. Multiple studies have documented parents' interest in providing sexuality education for their children (Abramson, Moriuchi, Waite, & Perry, 1983; Bennett & Dickinson, 1980). Despite these expressions of interest, however, many parents and adolescents fail to communicate verbally about sex and dating relationships. Fox (1979), in a review of research investigating the family's influence on adolescent sexual attitudes and

behaviour, reported that less than half of the teens actually communicated with parents about sex and relationships.

In one national study, North American adolescents were asked whether they and their parents talked pretty freely about dating and sex. Over 70% of both boys and girls reported that they did not (Sorensen, 1973). Similarly, Haas (1979) found that 44% of adolescent boys and 54% of teenaged girls reported that they had attempted to talk openly with either of their parents about sex but were often met with parental disapproval, denial, avoidance, or teasing.

Despite a lack of communication about relationships and sexuality, parents have been found to influence the sexual attitudes and behaviour of their children (Shelley, 1981). Social learning theory (e.g., Baldwin, 1963; Bandura & Walters, 1963) provides support for this theoretical conclusion in that the child's parents serve as a model of sex-related behaviour and values. A study by Shelley (1981) found that adolescents' perceptions of parental liberality consistently correlated with adolescent sexual attitudes. In other words, young people who believed that their parents held liberal sexual attitudes also reported more sexual liberalism.

In situations in which parents provided verbal sex education, Lewis (1973) found that their children were less likely to engage in premarital intercourse. In addition, the fewer sex topics covered by parents, the higher the likelihood that the children would engage in adolescent sexual intercourse. These data suggest that some parents are effective in

providing their children with appropriate sex knowledge and conveying more conservative attitudes and beliefs about sex.

Fischer (1988), however, found no support for Lewis' relationship between parental sex education and later sex activity. Rather, it was found that adolescents' attitudes toward sexual interaction and sex roles were significantly correlated with their parents' attitudes. In addition, it was reported that in families with open communication, the children were more likely to incorporate the sexual values of their parents into their own value system. These findings have definite implications for influencing young people's sexual knowledge, gender roles, and beliefs about dating relationships.

Current theories of sex-role socialization suggest that gender differences in perceptions of sex and relationships arise from the fact that males and females are usually socialized to perceive sexual activity from different perspectives (Jesser, 1978). Traditional sex roles prescribe that men initiate sex and women set limits on sexual activity (McCormick 1979; McCormick, Brannigan, & LaPlante, 1984). Men are socialized to be achievement-oriented; seeing "how far you can get" with a partner often serves to affirm masculinity regardless of the use of aggressive or coercive force (McCormick, 1979; McCormick et al., 1984). Therefore, a high value is placed on men's sexual experience. Women, however, are socialized to be relationship-oriented. They are expected to be passive and to place more energy in developing and maintaining loving relationships than acting upon sexual urges. This "restrictor" role is consistent with the socialized belief that women are less interested in sex and place greater stake in maintaining a good "reputation" for marriage (Gagnon &

Simon, 1973; McCormick, 1979; McCormick et al., 1984).

How or when differential socialization of sexual roles occurs is still unresolved. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) failed to find a difference in the socialization of young children concerning sexual activity based on parental behaviour. Yet, Ross (1979) found that adolescents frequently reported that their parents discouraged their daughters from engaging in sexual activity, but did not question their sons' sexual behaviours. This double standard for sexual behaviour reinforces the traditional sex roles of sexual activity for men and sexual restraint for women.

During adolescence, however, familial influences are often superseded by the young person's peer group. The following section provides evidence of the peer group's attempts to define and enforce traditional social scripts and rules of conduct for male-female interaction (Brown, 1982).

Peers as Sources of Information

Adolescence is a period in which the peer group is a particularly important frame of reference for knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Conger, 1984). Because of the heightened importance of the peer group during adolescence, motivation to conform to the values, customs, and behaviours of peer culture increases. Peer influence on adolescent sexual behaviour is reflected in a variety of ways: knowledge transmission, friends' attitudes and behaviour, and social pressure.

A study by Wintre, Hicks, McVey, and Fox (1988) investigated age, sex, and

situational differences in choice of consultant for advice or information about a problem. The results revealed that adolescents, particularly early adolescents, preferred familiar peers as consultants, especially for peer-related issues such as dating and sexual interaction. Considering that peers are often inexperienced and obtain information about sex from sources such as pornography, music videos, and television/movies which depict sexual relationships as violent and degrading toward women, or portray a double standard of sexual activity between the genders, there is no doubt that peers disseminate inaccurate information (Berger et al., 1973; Thornburg, 1988). Thus, it appears that adolescents learn most of their sex information from the least reliable source--peers (Thornburg, 1988). Not surprisingly, the accuracy of adolescents' sex knowledge varies from one topic to another and depends directly on the sources used. One survey reported by Thornburg (1988) evaluated source accuracy of information about sex by asking adolescents to indicate where they learned about a particular sex-related topic and what they had learned. It was found that for the topics of masturbation, intercourse, petting, contraception, and homosexuality, the information was learned from peers and was the least accurate. Other topics which were rated the most accurate, such as abortion, seminal emissions, prostitution, conception, and menstruation, were learned from more reliable sources like parents, school, and literature (Thornburg, 1988).

The influence of peers on adolescents' dating and sex-related attitudes and behaviour has been examined by several researchers within the socialization paradigm (Miller & Fox, 1987). This model suggests that sexual attitudes and behaviours are learned. Research has

shown that adolescents who received their sex knowledge from peers were more likely to engage in intercourse, have more partners, and initiate intercourse at an earlier age than young people who received their information from more reliable sources such as parents or school (Lewis, 1973; Spanier, 1977).

During adolescence, the role of the peer group in helping an individual define his or her own identity is particularly important. As a result, the adolescent's peer reference group is likely to be a decisive factor in the composition of the individual's belief system and behaviour repertoire. For example, Samet and Kelly (1987) examined adolescents' perceptions of dating in relation to their self-esteem and sex-role identities. Individuals who were involved in steady dating relationships reported higher self-esteem and believed themselves to better fit their respective sex-roles.

Peers' influence on dating and sexual interaction also occurs in other ways. Social pressures were identified in a national poll of adolescents as the main reason why teenagers do not wait to have sexual intercourse until they are older (Harris & Associates, 1986). Both boys and girls named social pressures more than any other influence, but girls (73%) mentioned it more often than boys (50%).

Alternate findings were reported by Christopher and Cate (1984) and Brown (1982). Males were found to be more likely than girls to be pressured by their social network to expect and achieve greater levels of sexual intimacy in dating relationships. These results support differing gender expectations, where males must achieve in all aspects of their lives (academics, athletics, sexual relationships) from a very young age (Fasteau, 1974).

Additional research has revealed the importance of male social networks in assimilating "acceptable" sexual attitudes. Goodchilds and Zellman (1984) found that male adolescents turned to their same-sex peers for information on sexual interaction, and placed more value in their friends' opinions than the opinions of others. Clearly, the onset of dating is socially scripted and tremendous pressure is placed on adolescents to adhere to gender-related sex roles, attitudes, and sexual behaviour which they believe to be the norm (Zelnik & Shah, 1981).

The Media as a Source of Information

Media influences also have an impact on adolescents' perceptions of sexuality and relationships. But just how much influence the media have on young adults' perceptions of themselves, the opposite sex, and their repertoire of socially acceptable attitudes and behaviours is unclear, and evidence of this factor will be investigated.

Television provides adolescents with messages about sexuality and relationships and plays a substantial role in adolescent sex education (Senn, 1988). The average teenager watches approximately 24 hours of television a week and is exposed to programs in which there is frontal nudity, depictions of violence and rape, promiscuity, and unrealistic sexual relations, all with little or no mention of the ramifications of such interaction (Harris & Associates, 1986). Sexuality in the media not only includes nudity and graphic sex, but information about marriage, infidelity, sex roles, physical attractiveness, and violence toward women. In addition, sexy television reinforces a double standard of sexual activity between

the genders. Active sex lives and sexual exploration with a variety of partners are acceptable practices for males. However, women are depicted as denying sexual urges and concentrating on developing emotional relationships (Harris & Associates, 1986; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Those women who fail to conform to the passive sexual stereotype are portrayed as "dirty", and those men who avoid sexual relations with women are "nerds".

A study by Brown and Newcomer (1991) found that adolescents "who chose heavier diets of sexy television shows were more likely than those who viewed a smaller proportion of sexual content on television to have had sexual intercourse" (p.78). In addition, teens reported that television was equally or more encouraging about sexual intercourse than their friends, and high television use has been correlated with dissatisfaction about virginity among high school and college students. In fact, students who think television accurately portrays sex are more likely to be dissatisfied with their own experiences (Harris & Associates, 1986). Clearly, young people learn about adult relationships from television, as well as learning aspects of sexual interaction.

The effects of mass media depictions of physical and sexual violence against women have been shown to have a detrimental impact on late adolescent males. Malamuth and Check (1985) found that male participants who viewed films depicting aggressive and violent acts were more accepting of the use of interpersonal violence to solve problems and of rape myths, than men who watched nonviolent films. Similar findings were reported by Russell, Horn, and Huddle (1988). Male volunteers watched films in which females engaged in aggressive behaviours (topless mud wrestling). Results revealed that the male participants'

mood state became more aggressive toward females.

"Slasher films" have also been found to desensitize men to violence toward women (Donnerstein & Linz, 1986). Donnerstein and Linz (1986) found that with increased exposure, men were more likely to rate such films as less degrading toward women. In addition, it was found that rape myths received more support with increased exposure to these films, despite the fact that no sexual assault was depicted. Because these films are viewed primarily by teens, Fisher and Barak (1991) suggest that this media influence may have a significant impact on adolescents' perceptions of appropriate sexual behaviour and interpersonal violence.

Pornography is another vehicle of the media whereby young people learn about gender expectations and behaviours. Exposure to pornography has been reported to begin during adolescence (Berger et al, 1973; Brown & Bryant, 1989, Senn 1993; Spanier, 1977). For girls, the social setting of exposure was heterosocial: girls were more likely to see pornographic media in the company of boys. For boys, exposure to sexually explicit materials was more likely to have been in a homosocial setting (Berger et al., 1973). It appears that the pornographic exposure system among adolescents begins with a large number of gatekeepers (particularly male) obtaining a small amount of sexually explicit material and circulating it through the social systems in which they participate. Duncan and Donnelly (1991) found pornographic materials to be highly utilized by college students, particularly males, for providing a knowledge base of sexual behaviour, sex roles, and interaction. Similarly, Berger et al. (1973) found a higher usage of pornographic material

by males than females, as well as an association between pornographic exposure and sociosexual experimentation among the men. This finding is most disturbing when the unrealistic portrayals of sex and degrading depictions of females within the films are considered. With the exposure to pornographic material occurring in the adolescent years, it is highly likely that young people will develop unrealistic expectations of sexual performance, and stereotypic gender roles for sexual interaction (males as dominant, females as objects for sexual gratification).

Sex Education as Source of Information

Education also serves to influence adolescents' perceptions of sexuality and relationships. It is hoped that educational interventions disseminate information which may contradict any incorrect knowledge and beliefs about sex, sex roles, and sexuality.

Around the turn of the century, information concerning sexuality came primarily from direct experience and minimally from a young person's family (Penland, 1981). By the late 1940's, the option of sex education in schools was part of an effort to broaden the educational health curriculum. According to the 1982 report of the National Academy of Sciences, at least three-quarters of the school districts in North America provided some form of sex education in their junior and senior high schools (Kirby & Scales, 1981). In surveys of 179 urban school districts, Shayne and Kaplan (1988) found that 75% of the elementary schools offered programs dealing with sex education.

Recent research has suggested that sex education may be advantageous for providing

children and adolescents with information that they may not be given at home. This information is beneficial for it serves as a protective mechanism against unwanted pregnancy and the transmission of sexual diseases. Moran and Corley (1991) found that sex education classes had a very strong relationship to reports of condom use among sexually active adolescent males. Of those reporting that they always used a condom, 71.4% learned about sexuality from a sex education class. On the other hand, only 21.4% of those males stating that they never use a condom had attended a sex education intervention. Moran and Corley (1991) also found that the young males in their sample found taking part in sex education classes to be a positive experience and 80.8% chose sex education interventions as a source of further information.

Sex education classes may also serve to protect children from sexual abuse (Crabbs, 1989; Senn, 1988). For example, Senn (1988) found that sex education programs could alter women's exposure to pornography and experiences of sexual coercion. High levels of exposure to pornographic material were significantly related to higher exposure to sexual violence for the women she studied. Conversely, high exposure to sex education programs was related to lower levels of violent sexual experiences. In this study, sex education had a positive impact against the effects of sex role socialization, sexual disease, unhealthy relationships, and violent sexual experiences.

Sex education programs designed to modify gender roles and gender stereotyping have also been found to be advantageous. Feltey et al. (1991) examined the influence of an education program for adolescents based on a feminist analysis of gender role

socialization. The program encouraged students to examine how societal norms and values "shape personal views on sexuality and sexual aggression" (p.232). Younger students adhered more to gender stereotypes and rape myth acceptance than older students after the program. In addition, students who had experienced sexual coercion or were sexually coercive themselves were more resistant to the intervention. This suggests that sexual education programs need to define "acceptable" sexual interaction and belief systems and focus on young adolescent populations. With prevention in mind, fewer students may be sexually coerced or sexually coercive if they receive sexual interventions designed to modify abusive attitudes and behaviours before they begin to date.

Despite the existence of sex education interventions and the evidence of their potential benefits, conflicting results have been found in the literature regarding the impact of such programs. Some researchers have suggested that sex education has minimal impact on the young adolescent's sexual attitudes and behaviour (Fine, 1988).

Stout and Rivara (1989) surveyed a number of studies in the United States that examined the outcome of sex education and adolescent pregnancy prevention interventions. The behavioural changes examined in five studies included sexual activity, contraceptive behaviour, and pregnancy rates. No effect was found in three studies with respect to sexual activity, and in the other two studies small and contradictory effects were found. With respect to contraceptive behaviour, sex education programs have had little influence on contraceptive use. Similarly, no measurable impact on teen pregnancy was found.

The negligible impact of sex education interventions on adolescent dating and sexual

practices has sparked criticism of human sexuality education. Kirby (1984) reported concerns that the information covered in sex education programs promotes early and more frequent sexual activity among adolescents. Several studies, however, have found no association between the probability of initiating sexual activity and having participated in sex education courses (Marsiglio & Mott, 1986). Research findings suggest that knowledge of relationships and sexuality encourages more responsible behaviour, as well as more tolerant sexual attitudes (Marsiglio & Mott, 1986). In addition, other researchers have found that among those adolescents who are sexually active and have taken sex education courses, there is an increase in contraceptive use and somewhat less likelihood of pregnancy (Zelnik & Kim, 1982).

The failure of some sex education interventions to change adolescent attitudes and behaviour may be a result of the curriculum and structure of the programs. For example, Shamaï and Coombs (1992) suggest that sex education programs may be too brief and they often do not establish clear goals for specific behavioural change and work towards these goals. Instead, they focus on transmitting information and on fear arousal.

Maslach and Kerr (1983) found in their interviews with adolescents that most were disinterested in sex education interventions, for the curriculum was insensitive to the concerns of the students. Students advocated a shift in emphasis of curricula from anatomy to more positive aspects of human sexuality (e.g., commitments and emotional factors associated with sex, not just the negative aspects of unwanted pregnancy and venereal disease). Respondents also suggested the development of sex education programs for their

parents. Many adolescents and parents fail to communicate verbally in the area of dating and sexuality.

Rationale

Dating has been widely researched among adult populations; however, studies examining early adolescent populations are much less prevalent and those that are available are inconsistent in their findings. Adult daters' knowledge and attitudes concerning dating interaction are largely derived from their personal experiences (Pryor & Merluzzi, 1985). Yet, for adolescent and preadolescent populations who have not begun dating, it is still not clear as to where they have received the information which has shaped their knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes about dating and sexuality.

Parents most probably influence and shape adolescents' perceptions of sexuality and relationships both through open communication about relationships and, indirectly, through parental values and behaviour (Baldwin & Baranoski, 1990). Peers also appear to play a large part in providing information about sex and relationships among adolescents (Wintre et al., 1988). In addition, the media (movies and television) and sex education instruction provide messages about sexuality and relationships and may play a substantial role in adolescent sex education (Senn, 1988). Although conflicting evidence has been found as to the relative impact of these sex education programs on adolescents' perceptions of dating and relationships, sex education does provide a medium through which young people can

learn accurate information about sexuality and relationships, perhaps more than through peers or the media.

The current study is designed to provide an understanding of the impact that parents, peers, media (television, music videos, rented, and theatre films), and sex education (curricula and teachers) have on shaping adolescents' knowledge and attitudes about dating relationships and sexuality. This study extends previous research by examining the relative impact of parents, peers, media, and sex education on young people's perceptions of dating and sexuality, rather than studying these factors as separate components. In addition, this study examined adolescents' evaluations of the accuracy and importance of these sources of information.

Research has shown that young people's attitudes toward dating begin to change across the adolescent years (Jackson, 1975; Roscoe et al., 1987). The concept of dating matures from a recreational activity in early adolescence to an opportunity for fulfilling intimacy and social interaction needs in middle and late adolescence. Despite the finding that a major shift in attitudes occurs during adolescence, there is little research addressing factors which influence or mediate this change. This study examined the variables which might have affected adolescents' shift in ideas across the teen years from early to late adolescence.

This study consisted of two components: a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire used rating scales, short answer, and open-ended questions. Respondents answered a number of short answer questions in an attempt to assess their dating behaviour

and attitudes toward dating. Participants also described their "worst" and "best" dates or, for those who had not yet begun dating, described the "worst" and "best" dates that they could imagine. Participants also outlined sources of information about sex and dating and indicated which sources gave them the most information, as well as the most accurate and valued information.

The interview was completed by a subsample of ten participants, following completion of the questionnaire. These randomly selected respondents were asked to respond to a number of issues similar to those explored in the questionnaire to permit more in-depth assessment of the individual and relative impact of parents, peers, the media (television, music videos, rented and theatre films) and school (curricula and teachers) on adolescents' attitudes and perceptions of dating and sexuality.

The purpose of this study was to assess the sources of information which influence early and middle adolescents' behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge about dating relationships. Specifically, this study investigated the relative impact of parents, peers, media, and school experience as sources of information about dating, adolescents' preference for these sources, and the perceived validity of the information the participants received from each source.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred participants (48 females, 52 males) aged thirteen to sixteen participated: half of the sample were early adolescents (13-14 years) and the other half were middle adolescents (15-16 years). All participants were recruited through the Kitchener-Waterloo Minor Lacrosse Association. Consent was obtained from the parents of the respondents as well as the participants themselves.

Only 17% of the participants reported belonging to a cultural affiliation. Of this group, the cultural backgrounds identified were German (29%), Indian (29%), Dutch (18%), Mexican (12%), and Portuguese (12%). The majority of the participants (85%) came from families with more than one child; 72% reported having sisters and 68% reported having brothers. In the majority of cases, the participants' parents worked outside of the home. Over half of the participants (55%) indicated that their mothers worked part-time inside the home and full-time outside of the home, and 83% reported that their father worked full-time outside the home. Fathers' full- and part-time primary occupations (n=84) included both white (30%) and blue collar (27%) workers. In addition, 19% of the participants reported that their fathers were managers/professionals and 8% were company owners. Mothers' full- and part-time primary occupations (n=89) were white collar workers (63%), blue collar workers (14%), managers/professionals (9%), and company owners (3%).

Materials

One questionnaire was constructed to assess both the individual impact and relative influence of parents, peers, media, and educational experiences on adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions about dating. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections (see Appendix A); demographic information, dating history, individual impact of external agents, and relative impact of external sources. Each of these sections is discussed below.

Demographic Information

Demographic information about the adolescent and his/her family was collected. Respondents were asked to indicate their age, gender, religion, culture, siblings, and the educational and employment history of their parents. Forty-nine respondents indicated that they were religiously affiliated. The majority of the participants' fathers had a university (34%), college (23%), or high school (29%) education, with 14% of the respondents' fathers not having a high school education. The educational exposure of the respondents' mothers was largely high school (42%) and college (27%). Nineteen per cent of mothers had attended university and 12% did not complete secondary school.

Dating History

The section on dating history contained short answer, open-ended questions, and rating scales. Within this section, adolescents completed one of two subsections, depending on whether they had any dating experience. Participants who had experience with dating were asked to indicate the reasons they chose to date, the number of dates they had been

on in the previous month, how long their previous relationship had lasted, and if they had engaged in kissing, petting, and/or sexual intercourse. Dating respondents were also asked to describe the "best" and "worst" dates that they had had. For example, "Describe the best date that you have had. What happened on this date that made it so good," "please describe the setting for the date," and "please describe your dating partner's behaviour." The information gathered from these questions was designed to reveal participants' dating experiences and perceptions of what makes a date successful or unsuccessful.

Participants who had no dating experience were asked to indicate why they had chosen not to date, and if they would consider dating in the future. Non-dating respondents were also asked to answer the same open-ended questions about what they thought would make a "good" date "good" and a "bad" date "bad" from the perspective of an *hypothetical*¹ date.

Individual Contributions of External Sources

The individual impacts of parents, peers, media (television, music videos, theatre and rented movies), and school (teachers and sex education curricula) as sources of information were examined using comparable questions across each source. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions was included and counterbalanced for order across each source of information. Likert-type scales were also used to measure how often adolescents consulted each of the four sources of information about dating, how much information they received

¹Dating adolescents responded based on their dating experiences and non-daters responded based on an ideal or hypothetical date, thus making direct comparisons between daters and non-daters difficult for this topic.

from each source about dating, and how correct they believed this information to be. Participants were also asked via Yes/No questions to indicate if their choice of dating partner was influenced by each source of information, if they felt any pressure to date from each source, and if they shared similar feelings and attitudes about dating as advocated by each source. Lastly, respondents were asked to indicate, in written form, the three most important things they had learned from each source of information.

Relative Impact of External Sources

The relative impacts of parents, peers, dating partners, the dating behaviour of others, relatives, siblings, the media (television, music, books/magazines), and school teachers were assessed by asking participants to order these 10 sources of information (a value of one was highest) based on the following criteria: which source gives you the most correct information about dating, which source gives you the most information, from which source do you feel most comfortable obtaining information about dating, from which source is it easiest to gain access to information about dating, and from which source do your classmates obtain information when dating. In addition, participants were asked if they valued friends as a source of information relative to parents, media, and school, to further determine if peers were the most important source of information for these adolescents.

Procedure

All participants and their parents were given an information package one week prior to the administration of the study. At this time, the experimenter informed the participants and their parents that the study examined the sources of dating information used by

teenagers. The information package contained: a written description of the research, a parental consent letter and consent form, and a participant consent form. Prior to receiving the questionnaire, respondents had to submit parental and participant consent. The parental and participant consent forms were attached and kept separately from the questionnaire. At no time were the respondents' names attached to any of the test materials. Subjects were then given the questionnaire and advised to fill out the survey privately and to return the materials to the experimenter in one week. Participants were expected to spend 45 minutes to 1 hour completing the questionnaire.

In addition, 10 randomly selected adolescents were asked to participate in a 30 minute interview after completing their questionnaires. These interviews permitted more in-depth assessment of the individual and relative impacts of parents, peers, media, and education on adolescents' attitudes and perceptions of dating and sexuality. Respondents were asked to discuss a number of issues using the standardized open-ended interview approach described by Patton (1980). Participants responded to a variety of questions to encourage flexibility in their responses and to reduce interviewer effects. The standardized interview questions are included in Appendix B. Participants were asked to indicate which source of information was most reliable and whom or what they would address to get information about dating if they had a pressing question. In addition, respondents were asked to describe the role and perceived impact of parents, peers, the media, and sex education as sources of information about dating and sexuality. The interviews also served as a means of follow-up to determine how comfortable the adolescents were with the

questionnaire and to better understand how to interpret the scaled items.

Participants were interviewed at their convenience in their own homes. Permission to record the interviews on audio tape was obtained via verbal consent. Tape recording the interviews was proposed in order to enable a more free-flowing discussion between the respondent and the experimenter and to aid in the transcription of the interviews. Written consent to participate in the interviewing process was also required from both parents and respondents. Participants responded openly to the interview questions and the 30 minute sessions ran smoothly.

RESULTS

Three aspects of the data were analyzed: dating history, individual contributions of external sources, and the relative impact of these external sources. For both the dating history and individual contribution components, qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted. Quantitative analyses were conducted on rating scale data for the relative impact of parents, peers, media, and school. The relative impacts of the four information sources were examined as a function of gender to assess the potential existence of gender differences due to differential socialization patterns (Jesser, 1978; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). The remaining measures were examined as a function of both age and gender, for adolescents' knowledge, behaviours, and perceptions of dating have been found to vary as a function of gender and developmental stage in previous research (Feltey et al., 1990; Jackson, 1975; Roscoe et al. 1987).

Quantitative Findings

Dating History. Information regarding dating history was gathered in order to describe the relationships that this adolescent sample had experienced. The first question was to determine whether this population, like those in existing research (Elkind, 1981; Postman, 1985), was actively dating. The second objective was to assess whether the participants' intimate dating activities varied by age or gender. Of the 100 participants, 64 respondents indicated that they had begun dating, 34 adolescents stated that they had not begun dating, and two individuals declined to answer this question. Of those participants who had begun dating, 95% were involved in only one dating relationship at a time. The average relationship lasted one to two months. All participants were asked to indicate if they had participated in kissing, petting, and sexual intercourse (see Table 1 for the percentages). Among early adolescent males (13 and 14 year olds), 54% or more reported kissing and petting on dates. In addition, approximately one quarter of respondents had engaged in sexual intercourse. Early adolescent females reported a negligible amount of sexual intercourse (0% and 18% respectively for 13 and 14 year olds) and little petting, although more than half had engaged in kissing. By middle adolescence (15 and 16 year olds), the pattern shifted such that all respondents reported engaging in kissing and over three quarters engaged in petting activities. In addition, reported sexual intercourse had increased to more than 60% for both males and females.

Table 1

Percentage of Participants Engaging in Kissing, Petting, and Sexual Intercourse

Age and Gender	n	kissing	petting	intercourse
13 years Male	13	85%	54%	23%
13 years Female	13	62%	08%	00%
14 years Male	14	93%	86%	29%
14 years Female	11	55%	36%	18%
15 years Male	12	100%	75%	67%
15 years Female	12	100%	83%	33%
16 years Male	13	100%	85%	54%
16 years Female	12	100%	100%	92%

Sources of Information about Dating. It was expected that parents, peers, media, and sex education would all serve as sources of information about dating. It was also expected that the amount of influence each exerted might differ as a function of age and, particularly, gender due to differential socialization patterns (Jackson 1975; Jessor, 1978; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Roscoe et al., 1987). Three questions were common across each of the four sources of information. Respondents were asked to indicate on five-point scales how much information they received from each source [none (1) to all (5)], the accuracy of the information provided by each source [not very correct (1) to very correct (5)], and the amount of influence of each source on the participants' choice of dating partner [almost none (1) to very strong (5)]. For each of the three questions, a 4 (age) x 2 (gender) x 8

(parents, peers, television, music videos, rented movies, theatre movies, sex education, and teachers) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using a significance level of .05. There were no significant main effects of age for any of the three questions; influence on partner choice, $F(3,31) < 1$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(3,92) < 1$, or accuracy of this information, $F(3,49) = 1.08$, $p = n.s.^2$ respectively. There was a significant main effect for gender for each of the three questions; the amount of influence on dating partner choice, $F(1,31) = 4.21$, $p < .005$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(1,92) = 10.40$, $p < .005$, and the accuracy of this information, $F(1,49) = 14.70$, $p < .005$. Females were more likely to be influenced in their choice of dating partner, received more information from each source, and credited this information as more accurate than did males.

There was a main effect of source for the amount of influence on participants' dating partner choice, $F(7,217) = 7.87$, $p < .001$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(7,644) = 14.51$, $p < .001$, and the accuracy of each source of information, $F(7,343) = 27.38$, $p < .001$. Subsequent paired t-test analyses were conducted for the sources of information in each of the three questions to reveal any significant differences between the sources (see Table 2 for means). Due to the large number of t-tests conducted for each question, an alpha value of .01 was used to protect against Type 1 errors. Only the significant paired t-tests are reported below. For the question assessing source influence on

²The degrees of freedom vary widely because many participants failed to respond to all three questions. For example, many participants did not respond to the accuracy question if they rated the source as providing little information about dating.

partner choice, television and friends ($t(79)=6.44$, $p<.01$), teachers and friends ($t(52)=5.92$, $p<.01$), parents and friends ($t(78)=3.76$, $p<.01$), rented movies and friends ($t(82)=12.00$, $p<.01$), music videos and friends ($t(79)=7.49$, $p<.01$), and friends and sex education ($t(79)=4.09$, $p<.01$) were found to be significantly different. Peers influenced participants' choice of dating partner more than did television, teachers, parents, rented movies, music videos, and sex education. For this same question, sex education and music videos ($t(92)=3.47$, $p<.01$), sex education and teachers ($t(64)=3.81$, $p<.01$), and sex education and rented films ($t(95)=11.06$, $p<.01$) were found to be significantly different. Sex education influenced respondents' choice of dating partner more than did music videos, teachers, and rented films. In addition, teachers significantly influenced participants' choice of dating partner more than did theatre films ($t(15)=3.60$, $p<.01$), and rented films ($t(68)=10.52$, $p<.01$). However, parents significantly influenced the adolescents' choice of partner more than did teachers ($t(62)=4.11$, $p<.01$), and rented movies ($t(93)=10.73$, $p<.01$). Finally, theatre films, music videos, and television significantly influenced participants' dating partner choice more than did rented films at ($t(22)=13.30$, $p<.01$), ($t(96)=7.80$, $p<.01$), and ($t(96)=9.21$, $p<.01$), respectively.

For the question assessing the amount of information received from the external sources of dating information, parents and music videos ($t(99)=2.88$, $p<.01$), parents and rented movies ($t(99)=14.96$, $p<.01$), peers and music videos ($t(99)=6.46$, $p<.01$), and peers and rented films ($t(99)=3.58$, $p<.01$) were significantly different. Parents provided more information about dating than did music videos and rented movies. Similarly, peers

presented participants with more dating information than music videos and rented films. In addition, teachers provided significantly more information about dating than did television ($t(99)=3.54, p<.01$), peers ($t(99)=3.16, p<.01$), theatre films ($t(99)=4.14, p<.01$), music videos ($t(99)=5.68, p<.01$), sex education ($t(99)=3.30, p<.01$), rented movies ($t(99)=4.75, p<.01$), and parents ($t(99)=4.23, p<.01$). However, sex education provided significantly more dating information than did music videos ($t(99)=5.40, p<.01$), rented films ($t(99)=3.48, p<.01$), and parents ($t(99)=2.60, p<.01$). For this same question, theatre movies and music videos ($t(99)=3.40, p<.01$), and theatre movies and sex education ($t(99)=4.74, p<.01$) were found to be significantly different. Theatre films provided more information about dating than did music videos and sex education. But, rented films provided significantly more information than did theatre movies ($t(99)=2.63, p<.01$). Finally, television and music videos ($t(99)=5.19, p<.01$), and television and rented films ($t(99)=2.89, p<.01$) were significantly different. Television provided more information about dating than did music videos and rented movies.

For the question assessing the accuracy of information received from the external sources of dating information, friends and parents ($t(77)=3.60, p<.01$), parents and television ($t(73)=3.87, p<.01$), and parents and rented videos ($t(71)=4.78, p<.01$) were significantly different. Parents provided more accurate dating information than did peers, television, and rented videos. For this same question, teachers and rented movies ($t(90)=7.99, p<.01$), teachers and television ($t(92)=9.16, p<.01$), teachers and parents ($t(73)=3.87, p<.01$), teachers and theatre films ($t(93)=9.19, p<.01$), teachers and sex

education ($t(88)=9.57, p<.01$), teachers and peers ($t(99)=9.01, p<.01$), and teachers and music videos ($t(87)=6.89, p<.01$) were significantly different. Teachers provided more accurate information than did rented and theatre films, television, parents, sex education, peers, and music videos. However, sex education was found to provide significantly more accurate information than did rented films ($t(82)=5.44, p<.01$), and music videos ($t(79)=6.05, p<.01$). In addition, television provided significantly more accurate information than did music videos ($t(84)=3.50, p<.01$), and sex education ($t(83)=3.44, p<.01$). Theatre films provided significantly more accurate dating information than did sex education ($t(84)=4.74, p<.01$), and parents ($t(75)=4.68, p<.01$). Music videos also provided significantly more accurate dating information than did peers ($t(87)=4.07, p<.01$) and theatre films ($t(84)=3.91, p<.01$). Finally, rented videos provided significantly more accurate information about dating than did peers, ($t(71)=4.78, p<.01$).

There were no significant interactions of age and gender for influence on partner choice, $F(3,31)<1$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(3,92)=1.33, p=n.s.$, or the accuracy of this information, $F(3,49)=1.00, p=n.s.$ There were no significant interactions of age and source for influence on partner choice $F(21,217)=1.05, p=n.s.$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(21,644)=1.17, p=n.s.$, and the accuracy of this information, $F(21,343)=1.09, p=n.s.$ Lastly, no significant age by gender by source interactions were found for influence on partner choice, $F(21,217)<1$, the amount of information received from each source, $F(21,644)<1$, and the accuracy of this information, $F(21,343)=1.16, p=n.s.$ Due to the significant gender effects reported above for the three

Table 2

Means and T values for the Questions Assessing
Dating Information Provided by Source, Source Accuracy,
and Source Influence on Dating Partner Choice

Source of Information	Gender	Means & t-values for the Question Assessing the Information Provided by Source	Means and t-values for the Question Assessing Source Accuracy	Means and t-values for the Question Assessing Source Influence on Partner Choice
Parents	Male	2.00	2.22	1.46
	Female	2.35 $t(98)=.42$	3.19 $t(76)=3.63$ $p<.001^*$	2.39 $t(92)=3.88$ $p<.001^*$
Peers	Male	2.34	2.98	2.35
	Female	2.71 $t(98)=.81$	3.56 $t(98)=1.80$	2.90 $t(81)=2.03$ $p<.05^*$
Television	Male	2.28	2.73	1.28
	Female	2.56 $t(98)=1.19$	3.94 $t(91)=6.37$ $p<.000^*$	1.96 $t(95)=3.43$ $p<.001^*$
Rented Movies	Male	1.94	3.45	1.45
	Female	2.12 $t(98)=.83$	3.80 $t(89)=1.87$	1.46 $t(95)=.03$
Theatre Movies	Male	2.00	3.13	1.35
	Female	2.39 $t(98)=1.04$	3.77 $t(92)=3.24$ $p<.005^*$	1.26 $t(91)=.64$
Music Videos	Male	1.44	3.72	1.41
	Female	1.94 $t(98)=2.28$ $p<.05^*$	4.15 $t(86)=1.90$	1.30 $t(95)=.66$
Sex Education	Male	2.44	2.57	1.76
	Female	2.83 $t(98)=1.03$	2.89 $t(87)=1.24$	1.89 $t(94)=.62$
Teachers	Male	3.07	3.19	1.12
	Female	4.12 $t(98)=.92$	3.23 $t(98)=.15$	1.30 $t(67)=1.05$

questions assessing source information, quantity and quality, and the influence of each source on partner choice, simple gender effects were included in subsequent analyses.

Participants were also asked to respond to questions about whether they felt pressure to date from parents, peers, media, and sex education, and whether they felt that they shared similar attitudes, a total of 8 groups to be analyzed by each source. The age x gender chi square assessing pressure to date from each source produced significant findings for two sources, television and peers (see Table 3 for chi's). Chi square analyses (age x gender) of participants' feelings of shared attitudes and beliefs about dating with each source yielded no significant findings. More detailed analyses regarding each source of information are presented below. All subsequent analyses used an alpha level of .05 to evaluate significance.

Information Provided by Source

Parents

To determine if adolescents perceived their parents as a source of information about dating, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale if their parents provided them with information about dating. Thirty-five percent of respondents felt that they received no information from their parents, 33% received "a little" information, 18% reported that they obtained "some" information, 12% indicated that they received "most" of their information, and 2% received "all" of their information from their parents. A t-test examining gender and the amount of dating information received from parents revealed no significant gender differences (see Table 2 for values). This information suggests that the quantity of

information provided by parents about dating does not differ as a function of gender.

Table 3

Chi's for Analyses Assessing Age x Gender x Source Of Information
for Pressure to Date and Shared Values Questions³

Source of Information	Pressure to Date by Source	Shared Values with Source
Parents	$\chi^2(7)=7.93$	$\chi^2(7)=7.05$
Peers	$\chi^2(7)=17.87, p<.05^*$	$\chi^2(7)=9.69$
Television	$\chi^2(7)=17.15, p<.05^*$	$\chi^2(14)=10.88$
Rented Movies	$\chi^2(7)=4.98$	$\chi^2(14)=14.54$
Theatre Movies	$\chi^2(7)=2.03$	$\chi^2(14)=8.99$
Music Videos	$\chi^2(7)=1.07$	$\chi^2(7)=8.79$
Sex Education	$\chi^2(7)=8.61$	$\chi^2(14)=7.22$
Teachers	N/A	$\chi^2(14)=20.43$

³The degrees of freedom vary because respondents could respond "Yes"/"No"/"Don't Know" to the question assessing shared values and attitudes with source. Respondents indicated all three options for television, rented and theatre films, sex education, and teachers. For parents, peers, and music videos, however, respondents answered only "Yes" and "No" to this question.

Peers

Past research has suggested that peers would be the primary source of dating information used by adolescents, particularly respondents aged thirteen and fourteen (Wintre et al., 1988). Overall, the majority of participants (85%) evaluated their friends as a source of information about dating. However, of these 85 participants, 38% indicated that their friends provided "a little" information, 30% indicated peers gave them "some" information, 14% reported that they were given "most" of their information from peers, and only 3% credited their friends as providing "all" their dating information. A t-test assessing gender effects for this question was not significant, $t(98) = .81$, $p = n.s.$ This suggests that gender does not predict differences in the ratings adolescents give their peers for providing information about dating.

The Media

Participants evaluated the influence of television, music videos, rented and theatre movies as sources of knowledge about dating. Eighteen per cent of the participants indicated that television provided them with no information about dating, 36% reported that television gave them "a little" information, 34% received "some" information, 9% received "most" of their information about dating from television, and only 1% received "all" their information about dating from television. A t-test examining gender and the amount of information received by television was not significant (see Table 2 for values).

For music videos, 58% indicated that they received absolutely no information, 25% believed that they received "a little" information, 13% reported that they received "some"

information from music videos, and 3% credited music videos as providing "most" of their dating information. Not one respondent credited music videos with providing "all" their dating information. However, there was a significant effect of gender, $t(98)=2.28$, $p<.05$. Females were more likely to receive information about dating from music videos than males.

For rented movies, 30% indicated that the movies provided them with no information about dating, 43% received "a little" information, 23% received "some" information, 1% credited rented movies with "most" of their information, and another 1% believed that rented movies provided them with "all" their dating information. No significant gender effect was found (see Table 2 for t-test). Lastly, theatre movies were rated by 27% of the respondents as providing no information about dating. Forty-four per cent believed that they received "a little" information, 23% received "some" information, 3% received "most" information, and 1% indicated that they received "all" their dating information from theatre films. Ratings did not differ as a function of gender (see Table 2 for the t value).

In general, information about dating obtained from media sources was similar for males and females except for music videos. Females identified music videos as a greater source of information than did males.

Sex Education

Sex education classes and teachers at respondents' schools were not endorsed at the same levels as were previous sources. Sex education classes provided the following percentages of participants with dating information: "none" (27%), "a little" (21%), "some" (33%), "most" (15%), and "all" (4%). Teachers also provided little dating information for

respondents: "none" (77%), "a little" (14%), "some" (8%), "most" (1%), and "all" (0%). Ratings for the amount of information provided by sex education and teachers did not differ as a function of gender (see Table 2 for values).

In summary, with respect to gender differences in the amount of information provided by each source, adolescent males and females rated parents, peers, television, rented and theatre movies, sex education classes, and teachers equally. Females received more information than males from music videos.

Accuracy of Source Information

Parents

To assess the validity of the information that participants received from their parents, a t-test by gender was conducted for the five point rating scale (ranging from not very correct (1) to very correct (5)). Of the participants who completed the rating scale, 16% found parental information to be "very correct", 18% reported that the information provided by parents was reasonably accurate, 22% rated this information "somewhat correct", 14% believed this information to be hardly correct and, 8% reported parental dating information to be "not very correct". A t-test revealed that females rated this information about dating as more correct than males, $t(76)=3.63$, $p<.001$.

Peers

Respondents were also asked to rate the accuracy of dating information provided by their peers on the scale ranging from not very correct (1) to very correct (5). Ten percent

believed that their peers gave them information that was "very correct", 17% reported that the accuracy of peers' dating information was reasonably accurate, 41% believed that the dating information provided by peers was "somewhat correct", 15% rated this information as hardly correct, and 13% believed this information to be "not very correct". A t-test by gender was not significant (see Table 2 for values). These findings suggest that the validity of dating information received from peers is not different by gender.

The Media

The accuracy ratings for each of the four media sources varied widely. One percent rated the information provided by theatre films as "very correct", 15% believed this information was reasonably accurate, 36% believed this information to be "somewhat correct", 25% felt that this information was hardly correct, and 17% reported that this information was "not very correct". Rented movies were believed to provide "very correct" information by 1% of respondents, reasonably correct information by 3% of the raters, 45% believed this information to be "somewhat correct", 21% felt that this information was hardly accurate, and 21% reported that this information was "not very correct". Not one participant rated music videos as a source of accurate dating information. Twelve percent believed that music videos were reasonably correct, 18% felt that music videos were "somewhat correct", 21% thought that music videos were hardly accurate, and 37% rated music videos as a source that was "not very accurate". Finally, television information accuracy was rated as "very correct" by 4% of the participants who responded, reasonably

correct by 14%, "somewhat correct" by 38% of the respondents, hardly correct by 19%, and "not very correct" by 18% of the participants.

Three t-test analyses assessing gender and source accuracy for television, music videos, rented and theatre movies revealed no significant gender differences for music videos, and rented movies (see Table 2 for values). However, gender effects were found for television, $t(91)=6.37$, $p<.001$. Females were more likely to rate television as an accurate source of dating information than were males. In addition, a significant effect of gender was reported for theatre movies, $t(92)=3.24$, $p<.005$. Once again, females rated theatre films higher than did males as a source of accurate dating information.

Sex Education

Of the adolescents who rated the accuracy of dating information provided in sex education classes, 17% reported that these classes provided them with information that was "very correct", 20% believed that the information was reasonably accurate, 31% felt that this information was "somewhat correct", 11% believed this information to be hardly correct, and 10% rated the information provided by sex education classes as "not very correct". A t-test evaluation of the accuracy of sex education classes by gender indicated no significant differences (see Table 2 for values).

Source Influence on Partner Choice

Parents

To determine if parents influence their adolescents' dating partner choice, participants rated on a five point scale, ranging from almost none (1) to very strong (5), how much influence their parents had. Fifty-five percent reported that their parents' influence on their choice of dating partner was "almost none", 10% reported a "small amount" of influence, 15% rated parental influence as "moderate", 10% reported a "strong" influence, and 4% believed their parents to have a "very strong" influence on their choice of dating partner. A t-test assessing gender differences with regard to parental influence on adolescents' dating partner choice revealed a significant effect of gender, $t(92)=3.88$, $p<.001$. Females were more likely to indicate that their parents influenced their choice of dating partner than were males.

Peers

Respondents also indicated peer influence on partner choice. It was suggested that peers would serve as a greater source of influence on dating partner choice than any other source, due to the fact that the peer group is such an important frame of reference for knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour for adolescents (Conger, 1984). Examination of the rating frequencies for this question indicated that 25% believed peers had almost no influence on their choice of dating partner, 10% indicated a "small amount", 22% reported a "moderate" amount of influence, 24% believed peers to have a "strong" influence, and 2% reported a "very strong" influence. A t-test for this question by gender was conducted and

revealed significant gender differences with respect to peer influence on participant choice of dating partner, $t(81)=2.03$, $p<.05$. Once again, females believed that their peers influenced their choice of dating partner more than did males. Therefore, peer influence on partner choice does vary as a function of gender.

The Media

Media influence on partner choice was minimal for television, rented videos, theatre films, and music videos. Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported that they received almost no influence from television, 9% received a "small amount" of influence, 15% reported "moderate" impact, 4% felt that their partner choice was strongly influenced by television, and 2% reported a "very strong" television influence on their choice of dating partner. For rented films, 72% reported almost no influence, 12% indicated a "small amount" of influence on dating partner choice, 8% indicated "moderate" impact, 4% reported a "strong" influence and 1% indicated a "very strong" influence of rented videos on their choice of dating partner. Seventy-three percent indicated that theatre films had almost no influence on the adolescents' partner choice, 13% reported a "small amount" of influence, 5% indicated "moderate" influence, and 2% rated theatre movies as a "strong" influence on dating partner choice. Similar findings were reported for the influence of music videos on dating partner choice. Of the 97 adolescents who responded to the question, 78% reported almost no impact of music video viewing on partner choice, 6% indicated a "small amount", 10% believed that their choice of dating partner was moderately influenced by music videos, and 3% reported a "strong" influence.

No significant gender differences as a function of gender were found for music videos, rented or theatre films for influence on partner choice (see Table 2 for t values). However, a significant gender difference was found for television's influence on dating partner choice, $t(95)=3.43$, $p<.001$. Females reported feeling greater influence from television with respect to choosing a dating partner than did males.

Sex Education

Sex education classes were found to have almost no impact on dating partner choice for 51% of respondents. Nineteen percent reported a "small amount" of influence on partner choice, 19% indicated "moderate" influence, 6% believed that sex education classes "strongly" influenced their choice of dating partner and 1% indicated a "very strong" influence. A t-test assessing the influence of sex education classes on participants choice of dating partner revealed no significant gender differences (see Table 2 for the value).

The influence of teachers on dating partner choice for the respondents was "almost none" for 63%, a "small amount" for 2%, a "moderate" impact for 4% and "very strong" influence for 1% of respondents. A t-test examining gender differences in teachers influence on adolescents' dating partner choice revealed no significant findings (see Table 2 for the value). Both sex education curricula and teachers' influence on young people's choice of dating partner do not appear to differ by student gender.

With respect to gender differences in the influence of each source on participants' choice of dating partner, adolescent males and females rated music videos, rented and

theatre movies, sex education, and teachers equally. Females reported greater influence on their choice of dating partner from parents, peers, and television than did males.

Pressure to Date by Source

Parents

Chi square analyses were also conducted to assess age and gender differences with respect to the amount of pressure parents placed on participants' to date. Ninety percent of the participants reported that they were not pressured to date by their parents. A 2 (gender) x 2 (Yes/No) table revealed a trend which suggested that males (15.4%) were more likely to feel pressure to date from their parents than females (4.2%), however, the analysis was not significant $\chi^2(1)=3.49$, $p=n.s.$, and overall, only a small sample of adolescents reported any pressure at all. A 4 (age) x 2 (Yes/No) table revealed no significant age differences for parental dating pressure $\chi^2(3)=2.22$, $p=n.s.$ Parental pressure to date, thus does not appear to vary as a function of gender (see Table 4 for chi's).

Peers

It was expected that peers would serve as a source of pressure to date, particularly for females, due to the findings of a national poll indicating that social pressures frequently influenced adolescents' decisions to date and partake in sexual activity (Harris and Associates, 1986). Forty percent of participants indicated that they experienced pressure to date by their friends. A 2 (Yes/No) x 2 (gender) chi square analysis revealed that significantly more females than males (Female=56.3%, Male=25.0%, $\chi^2(1)=10.16$, $p<.001$)

indicated that they felt pressure from peers to begin dating. No age differences were found, $\chi^2(3)=1.00$, $p=n.s.$

The Media

An examination of the frequencies of peer pressure by each media source indicated that 92% of respondents were not influenced by rented movies, 91% indicated that they were not pressured by theatre films, 93% were not pressured to date by music videos, and 26% of participants felt that they experienced pressure to date by television.

A 2 (Yes/No) x 2 (gender) chi square analysis revealed that females felt pressure to date from television more than males (Female=37.5%, Male=15.4%, $\chi^2(1)=6.3$, $p<.01$). A 4 (age) x 2 (Yes/No) chi square analysis did not indicate any significant age differences, $\chi^2(3)=1.22$, $p=n.s.$ Similar 2 (gender) x 2 (Yes/No) chi square analyses for music videos, rented and theatre movies revealed no significant gender differences (See Table 4 for chi's). Several 2 (Yes/No) x 4 (age) chi square analyses for music videos ($\chi^2(3)=1.69$, $p=n.s.$), rented ($\chi^2(3)=1.62$, $p=n.s.$), and theatre movies ($\chi^2(3)=1.01$, $p=n.s.$) revealed no significant age differences.

Sex Education

Eighty-eight percent of the participants in this sample indicated that they did not feel pressure to date from their sex education class. A 2 (Yes/No) x 2 (gender) chi square analysis ($\chi^2(1)=.65$, $p=n.s.$) and a 2 (Yes/No) x 4 (age) chi square analysis ($\chi^2(3)=2.21$, $p=n.s.$) were both non-significant, suggesting that pressure to date by sex education does not differ as a function of age or gender (see Table 4 for chi's). Participants were not asked if

they felt pressure to date from teachers.

In summary, there were no differences as a function of age in the amount of pressure that adolescents perceived regarding whether or not they should date. There was some differential impact as a function of gender, with females perceiving more pressure to date from peers and television than males.

Table 4

Simple Chi Square Analyses for Each Source of Dating Information
as a Function of Gender

Source of Information	Age & Gender	Percentages and Chi values for the Question Assessing Respondents' Perceived Pressure to Date	Percentages and Chi values for the Question Assessing Respondents' Shared Values and Beliefs With Source
Parents	M F	14.4% $\chi^2(1)=3.49$ 4.20%	17.3% $\chi^2(1)=1.39$ 27.1%
Peers	M F	25.0% $\chi^2(1)=10.16$, 56.3% $p<.001^*$	67.3% $\chi^2(1)=5.74$ 87.5% $p<.001^*$
Television	M F	15.4% $\chi^2(1)=6.3$ 37.5% $p<.01^*$	26.9% $\chi^2(2)=.15$ 40.4%
Rented Movies	M F	5.90% $\chi^2(1)=.23$ 8.30%	7.80% $\chi^2(2)=3.35$ 14.9%
Theatre Movies	M F	5.90% $\chi^2(1)=.68$ 10.4%	15.7% $\chi^2(2)=1.53$ 16.7%
Music Videos	M F	7.70% $\chi^2(1)=.08$ 6.30%	29.4% $\chi^2(1)=3.58$ 47.9%
Sex Education	M F	7.80% $\chi^2(1)=.65$ 12.8%	9.80% $\chi^2(2)=.42$ 6.40%
Teachers	M F	N/A	7.30% $\chi^2(2)=.65$ 11.1%

Shared Values with Source

Parents

The percentage of participants who indicated that they shared similar values with parents was much lower (22%) than those who indicated they did not (78%). Subsequent 2 (Yes/No) x 4 (age) and 2 (Yes/No) x 2 (gender) chi square analyses revealed no age ($\chi^2(3)=3.03$, $p=n.s.$) or gender differences ($\chi^2(1)=1.39$, $p=n.s.$).

Peers

Chi square analyses were used to determine if participants felt that they shared similar beliefs, attitudes, and values as their peers. Seventy-seven percent of the adolescents indicated that they shared similar values to their peers and 23% indicated they did not. A 2 (gender) x 2 (Yes/No) chi square indicated a significant effect of gender with respect to sharing similar values, $\chi^2(1)=5.74$, $p<.05$, with significantly more females (87.5%) reporting sharing similar values and ideas about dating with their peers than males (67.3%). No age differences were found in a 2 (Yes/No) x 4 (age) chi square analysis, $\chi^2(3)=1.07$, $p=n.s.$ (see Table 4 for chi's). Peer-participant shared beliefs appear to vary as a function of gender, but not age.

The Media

Participants, when asked if they shared similar values and attitudes concerning dating as those reinforced on the television programs they viewed, indicated "No" (30%), "Yes" (33%), and "Don't Know" (36%). A 3 (Yes/No/Don't Know) x 2 (gender) chi square found no significant gender differences and a 3 (Yes/No/ Don't Know) x 4 (age) chi square analysis

revealed no age differences $\chi^2(3)=2.68$, $p=n.s.$ (see Table 4 for chi's). Participants were also asked to indicate "Yes/No/Don't Know" if they felt that they shared similar values and beliefs as those reinforced through rented movies, theatre movies and music videos. Participants indicated "Yes" (11%), "No" (40%), and "Don't Know" (47%) for rented videos and for theatre films; respondents indicated "Yes" (16%), "No" (39%), and "Don't Know" (44%) with respect to sharing similar values as those portrayed in these media sources. Two 3 (Yes/No/Don't Know) x 2 (gender) chi squares were conducted and revealed no significant differences by gender (see Table 4 for chi's). In addition, two 3 (Yes/No/Don't Know) x 4 (age) chi square analyses for theatre ($\chi^2(3)=4.84$, $p=n.s.$) and rented movies ($\chi^2(3)=9.29$, $p=n.s.$) were conducted and revealed no significant age differences, respectively.

For music videos, 61% reported "No" and 38% reported "Yes" that they shared similar attitudes and values as this source. A 2 (Yes/No) x 2 (gender) and a 2 (Yes/No) x 4 (age) chi square analyses revealed no significant gender, $\chi^2(1)=3.58$, $p=n.s.$ or age differences $\chi^2(3)=2.71$, $p=n.s.$

It appears that these respondents, regardless of age or gender, did not feel that they shared similar values, attitudes, and beliefs as those reinforced by television, rented/theatre movies or music videos.

Sex Education

All respondents were asked if they felt that they shared similar beliefs, values and attitudes as those reinforced in their sex education classes and by their teachers. For sex education classes, 42% indicated "No", 8% indicated "Yes", and 48% indicated "Don't

Know". Thirty-one percent of participants reported that they did not share similar attitudes and values with those of their teachers, 7% believed that they did share similar values, and 48% indicated that they did not know if they shared a similar value base concerning dating with their teachers. Two 3 (Yes/No/Don't Know) x 2 (gender) chi square analyses indicated no significant gender differences for sex education classes or teachers (see Table 4 for chi's). In addition, two 3 (Yes/No/Don't Know) x 4 (age) chi squares revealed no significant age differences in participants' reports of shared beliefs and values about dating with their sex education classes ($\chi^2(3)=1.77$, $p=n.s.$) or their teachers ($\chi^2(3)=1.08$, $p=n.s.$).

In summary, there were no differences as a function of age in the adolescents' perceived sharing of similar values and attitudes with each source. There was some differential impact as a function of gender, with females perceiving a greater sharing of attitudes and values about dating than males with their peers.

Additional Analyses: Parents and the Media

Respondents were also asked to indicate "Yes/No" if they spoke to their mother and/or father about dating in order to discover if male and female adolescents discussed the topics of dating and sexuality with their parents. Two chi-square analyses, involving a 2 (male/female) x 2 (Yes/No) table and a 4 (age) x 2 (Yes/No) table were constructed for each parent. A greater proportion of females reported speaking to their mothers about dating than did male respondents, Female=52.1%, Male=28.8%; $\chi^2(1)=5.62$, $p<.05$. There were no significant differences between males and females in their likelihood of talking with their

fathers, Female=22.9%, Male=13.7%; $\chi^2(1)=1.40$, $p=n.s.$ In addition, no significant age differences were found for adolescents' willingness to discuss dating with their mothers, $\chi^2(3)=.333$, $p=n.s.$, or their fathers, $\chi^2(3)=2.60$, $p=n.s.$ Analysis also revealed that mothers were the parent of choice with which respondents could feel comfortable discussing dating issues, regardless of the respondent's gender (Female=84.1%, Male=45.5%; $\chi^2(2)=14.7$, $p<.001$); however, females were much more likely to approach only their mother than were males.

Adolescents' exposure to three levels of pornographic videos were also examined. Participants were asked to indicate if they had ever seen an R-rated film (nudity, sexual intercourse depictions), adult movies (erotica films), and/or X-rated movies (hard-core pornography). In all three instances males reported viewing pornography more frequently than females. Chi square analyses using 2 (yes/no) by 2 (male/female) tables for each video source were significant. R-rated movies (Female=77.1%, Male=98.0%; $\chi^2(1)=10.19$, $p<.05$) were the most commonly viewed, followed by adult movies (Female=53.3%, Male=86.5%; $\chi^2(1)=12.95$, $p<.05$) and lastly, X-rated movies (Female=29.5%, Male=68.8%; $\chi^2(1)=14.11$, $p<.05$). In addition, no significant age differences in R-rated, $\chi^2(6)=6.64$, $p=n.s.$, adult, $\chi^2(6)=4.79$, $p=n.s.$, or X-rated, $\chi^2(6)=3.78$, $p=n.s.$, movie viewing were found. For these types of media, however, males report greater exposure than females.

In summary, there were no differences as a function of age in the likelihood of adolescents' talking to either parent about dating or in the amount of pornographic films viewed by participants. There was some differential impact as a function of gender with

females reporting a greater willingness to discuss dating issues with their mothers than males. Similarly, significant gender differences were reported with respect to pornographic video exposure whereby males reported greater exposure than females to R-rated, adult, and X-rated movies.

Relative Contributions of External Sources

Separate from determining what sources provided information or were valued by participants, an analysis was also undertaken to identify the relative impact of the following sources: parents, dating partners, dating behaviour of others, television, relatives, siblings, teachers/school, books, magazines, music/music videos, and friends. To assess the relative impact of each source of information, participants were asked to rank 10 sources of information pertaining to five issues: how comfortable the respondent felt obtaining information from each source, the accuracy of information given by each source, which were the easiest sources to access, which sources would be used most by peers, and how much information each source provided on dating. A ranking of "one" represented the highest ranking and "ten" the lowest. A 2 (gender) X 10 (sources of information) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each of the five ranking questions indicated above. Age was excluded from these analyses, for few of the statistical techniques examining age effects in the previous section were significant, and thus did not support further examination of the age factor.

All five ranking questions revealed gender differences within the sources of information as indicated by Gender x Source interactions: gender and the accuracy of information given by each source ($F(9,864)=3.07, p<.001$), gender and the comfort level about obtaining dating information ($F(9,873)=4.25, p<.001$), gender and the quantity of dating information obtained from each source ($F(9,864)=2.65, p<.005$), gender and the easiest sources to access ($F(9,846)=3.67, p<.001$), and gender and the sources used by peers ($F(9,855)=3.34, p<.001$).

Subsequent t-test analyses of these rankings revealed gender differences for the specific sources (see Table 5 for the means). Due to the number of t-test analyses conducted for this section, an alpha value of .01 was used to determine significance and protect against Type 1 error. Males ranked dating partners as sources who provided more accurate dating information (Male $\bar{X}=3.29$, Female $\bar{X}=4.63$; $t(98)=2.86, p<.01$), more comfort (Male $\bar{X}=3.72$, Female $\bar{X}=5.10$; $t(97)=2.83, p<.01$), and were easier sources to access (Male $\bar{X}=3.48$, Female $\bar{X}=4.68$; $t(96)=2.90, p<.01$) than did females.

Table 5

Mean Values for the Relative Contributions of the Ten External Sources

Sources of Information	Gender	Source Most Used by Classmates	Source that is Most Comfortable	Easiest Source to Access	Most Accurate Source of Information	Source that Provides Most Information
Parents	M	4.53	5.05	5.41	3.74	5.07
	F	4.19	5.14	4.34	3.02	4.68
Dating Partners	M	3.42	3.72	3.48	3.29	3.68
	F	4.29	5.10	4.68	4.63	4.53
Dating Behaviour	M	4.51	4.68	4.94	4.35	5.00
	F	5.95	6.00	6.10	5.38	5.70
Television	M	4.28	5.25	4.20	5.21	4.68
	F	4.98	5.27	5.29	5.61	4.17
Relatives	M	5.63	5.05	6.10	5.98	5.98
	F	6.54	5.47	6.42	6.17	6.68
Siblings	M	5.16	6.09	6.06	5.82	6.60
	F	4.81	5.02	5.04	5.51	5.55
Teachers	M	7.00	6.76	6.81	6.27	5.51
	F	6.39	6.20	6.04	5.29	5.97
Books	M	6.81	6.51	5.24	6.11	5.62
	F	6.20	6.20	5.74	6.40	5.97
Music	M	7.61	7.67	7.44	7.82	7.00
	F	8.02	7.91	8.12	8.38	7.87
Friends	M	5.71	4.62	5.06	6.21	5.66
	F	3.70	3.71	4.59	4.98	3.78

Qualitative Findings

Dating History. Content analysis was the strategy adopted for examining the behaviours and cognitions associated with participants' date definitions, the respondents' reasons for participating in, or refraining, from dating, as well as participants' experienced or hypothetical "worst" and "best" dates. Based on the qualitative inductive analysis described by Patton (1980), open-ended responses were grouped according to themes that were common and recurrent across respondents for each question. Upon completion of theme categorization for each question, percentages for each category were calculated. The proportion of interviews scored by two independent raters was 20%. Inter-rater reliability for these data was 88%.

The first question asked participants to indicate their "definition" of a date. Ninety-eight participants responded in total. Four date descriptions were mentioned by respondents: going out with a partner (60%), spending time with someone you care deeply about (27%), going out with friends (8%), and communicating with a partner (3%), and other (2%). Examples of each date description category are included below.

He picked me up and took me to a restaurant and then to a movie (Female, age 14).

We sat at her place and watched movies and cuddled until 2:00am. It was so nice to spend an evening alone with the one I love (Male, age 15).

My friends go to the mall every Friday night. We just hang out in the food court and meet people (Female, age 13).

We sat on the hill near my place and talked and talked about everything. She was really nice and we had a lot of common things to talk about (Male, age 14).

We met after school and held hands (Female, age 13).

The second question assessed dating participants' reasons for choosing to date and non-daters reasons for refraining from dating. All sixty-four dating participants provided reasons for dating, including meeting new people (65%), getting to know someone better (30%), and spending time with someone you care about (5%). Thirty-two of the thirty-four non-daters provided reasons as to why they chose not to date which fit into one of five categories: not permitted to date due to parental and/or religious reasons (35%), have not found the right person to ask out on a date (28%), have not been asked or asked anyone to date (17%), not interested in dating (11%), and no time to date (9%).

The next set of questions asked participants to describe their real or imagined "best" and "worst" dates. It was believed that early and middle adolescents might describe a "good date" as one in which fun and exciting recreational activities were likely to occur (Jackson, 1975; Roscoe et al., 1987). Conversely, a "bad date" might be reported as one in which fun recreational activities did not occur. Middle adolescents might also mention romance and companionship as part of making their "best date" so good.

Participants' descriptions of their "best" dates were analyzed separately according to age, gender, and whether the participant was describing a dating experience (daters) or a hypothetical date (non-daters). The occurrence of each event was recorded and coded into one of the mutually exclusive categories indicated below. Upon completion of the analyses,

both non-daters and daters, regardless of age, reported similar characteristics of a best date.

Table 6 contains the descriptions of a "best" date by dating experience and gender.

TABLE 6

Descriptions of "Best" Date by Daters and Non-Daters and by Gender⁴

Daters n=64	Gender	Non-Daters n=32	Gender
Going to a public place (47%)	Male 56% Female 41%	Going to a public place (44%)	Male 33% Female 53%
Communicating with Date (20%)	Male 12% Female 26%	Having fun with partner (25%)	Male 33% Female 18%
Partner behaves romantically (19%)	Male 04% Female 28%	Partner indicates that he/she likes you (22%)	Male 20% Female 23%
Engaging in sex-related activities (14%)	Male 28% Female 05%	Engaging in sex-related activities (9%)	Male 13% Female 18%

For both daters and non-daters a "best" date was most frequently described as going out alone with a partner to a public place such as a movie theatre, dance bar, or restaurant. The second most frequent description of a "best" date for dating adolescents was being able to speak openly with their partner and non-dating adolescents indicated having fun with their partner. Thirdly, daters indicated that seeing a romantic partner constituted a "best" date, and non-daters indicated having a date that liked you also constituted a "best" date.

⁴Gender percentages are a function of the total number of males or females in that category

Lastly, a small proportion of both daters and non-daters indicated that sex-related activities would make their "best" date really good. Overall, it appears that there were few differences between daters' and non-daters' descriptions of a "best" date.

To assess age and gender differences in participants' perceptions of a "best" date, chi square analyses were undertaken for both daters and non-daters. A 2 (gender) x 4 (dating respondents' "best" date descriptions) chi square was significant, $\chi^2(3)=12.67, p<.05$. Dating females emphasized a romantic partner (17%) and communicating with their partner (15%) as more important in making a "best" date so good.

He took me to a romantic restaurant and gave me flowers and held my hand throughout the whole evening (Female, age 16).

We went for a long car ride in the country and talked about our families and friends.

I felt really close to him because he had opened up to me about some things that were important to him and I did the same (Female, age 15).

Dating males were more inclined to support going out to public places (44%) and engaging in sex-related activities (11%) as making a date really good.

She was a lot of fun and in a good mood. We rode all the roller coasters and laughed and had so much fun (Male, age 14).

She was very good looking and to tell you the truth, I got laid. That made my date so good (Male, age 15).

However, a 2 (gender) x 4 (non-dating respondents' "best" date descriptions) chi square was not significant, $\chi^2(3)=2.00, p=n.s.$ In addition, chi square analyses examining age

differences in daters' ($\chi^2(9)=8.63$, $p=n.s.$) and non-daters' ($\chi^2(9)=10.64$, $p=n.s.$) "best" date descriptions were not significant. It appears that participants' "best" dates vary as a function of gender for dating participants and the pattern of participants' responses for this question appears to partially support our informal prediction that "best" dates involve recreational interaction.

Participants' descriptions of their partners' behaviour on both their real and imagined "best" dates are summarized in Table 7. Once again content analysis was employed and daters' and non-daters' responses were analyzed separately by age and gender. Differences in daters' and non-daters' responses were evident only for the third groups for this question. There was a reversal in the top two categories for daters and non-daters. Daters most commonly reported that a partner who engaged in caring gestures helped to make their date so good. Non-daters most frequently reported that having a fun partner would help make a date successful. Secondly, daters emphasized a fun/happy partner and non-daters emphasized a partner that made caring gestures as necessary in making their best date so good. A partner who communicated openly was the third most reported description indicated by dating respondents. Non-daters preferred a dating partner who would indicate that they liked them as their third choice. Lastly, both daters and non-daters reported that having a partner that wanted to engage in sexual relations made or would help make their date really good. Few differences appear to exist between daters and non-daters descriptions of their partners' behaviour on "best" dates.

Gender differences in participants' responses, however, were apparent. A 2 (gender) x 4 (daters' descriptions of partners' behaviour on a "best" date) chi square analysis was significant $\chi^2(3)=12.03, p<.05$. Dating male participants more frequently described their partner's behaviour on a "best" date as "being fun and in a good mood" (44%) and "willing to engage in sex" (16%).

**I made her dinner and we had some wine. We got drunk and had a lot of fun. She smiled and laughed all night and was so much fun to be with (Male, age 16).
At my friend's party, we went upstairs and talked for a while and then we slept together (Male, age 15).**

TABLE 7

Descriptions of Partner's Behaviour on "Best" Date
for Daters and Non-Daters by Gender⁵

Daters n=50	Gender	Non-Daters n=25	Gender
Partner makes caring gestures (42%)	Male 32% Female 52%	Partner is in a good mood and fun (40%)	Male 67% Female 15%
Partner is in a good mood and fun (30%)	Male 44% Female 16%	Partner makes caring gestures (32%)	Male 08% Female 54%
Partner communicates openly (20%)	Male 08% Female 32%	Partner indicates that he/she likes you (20%)	Male 08% Female 31%
Willing to engage in sex-related activities (8%)	Male 16% Female 00%	Willing to engage in sex-related activities (8%)	Male 17% Female 00%

⁵Gender percentages are a function of the total number of males or females in that category.

Dating female participants emphasized a partner that was "communicative" (32%) and "made caring gestures" (52%) helped to make their "best" date so good.

We sat on the hill outside my house and talked for hours about our families and school. We had a lot in common (Female, age 13).

He was very nice to me and held my hand through dinner. At the movies he put his arm around me and kissed the top of my head (Female, age 14).

Similarly, a 2 (age) by 4 (non-daters' descriptions of partners' behaviour on a "best" date) chi square analysis was also significant, $\chi^2(3)=11.77$, $p<.05$. Non-dating male participants more frequently described their partner's behaviour on a "best" date as "being in a good mood" (67%) and "willing to engage in sex" (17%).

She would smile and have fun no matter what we did (Male, age 13).

She would want to kiss and have sex (Male, age 14).

Non-dating females, however, supported the trend that a "caring" partner (54%) and one that "indicates that he likes you" (31%) made their "best" date so good.

He would open doors for me and hold my hand (Female, age 13).

He would tell me that he enjoyed spending time with me and would tell me that he liked me for who I was (Female, age 14).

Chi square analyses by age for both daters' ($\chi^2(9)=10.22$, $p=n.s.$) and non-daters' ($\chi^2(9)=9.70$, $p=n.s.$) descriptions of a "best" date revealed no significant differences in participants' responses.

Both daters and non-daters shared similar categories for the descriptions of their "worst" dates and their partners' behaviour on their "worst" dates. The pattern of responses was almost identical across the four age groups. Participants descriptions of a "worst" date and their partners' behaviour on a "worst" date are reported in Table 8.

The shared description of a "worst" date for daters and non-daters was being ignored. Daters, however, reported that: fighting, no communication, and an arrogant partner would make their date a poor one. Non-daters described a "worst" date as one in which they would be dumped, and used by their partner, as well as being forced to spend time with an unattractive date. Both daters and non-daters reported that a partner that behaved like a "bitch" or "asshole" and ignored them would ruin their date. Daters further described their partners' behaviours on a "worst" date as being uncommunicative and argumentative. Non-daters reported that a partner who would use them and was rude would help to make their "worst" date go so poorly.

Chi square analyses by age and gender of dating and non-dating respondents' descriptions of their "worst" dates and partner behaviours on a "worst" date were conducted. A 2 (gender) x 4 (dating respondents' descriptions of a "worst" date) chi square analysis revealed no significant gender differences, $\chi^2(3)=3.65$, $p=n.s.$, as did a 2 (gender) x 4 (non-dating respondents' descriptions of a "worst" date) chi square, $\chi^2(3)=2.68$, $p=n.s.$ A 4 (age) x 4 (dating respondents' descriptions of a "worst" date) chi square also indicated the absence of significant age differences, $\chi^2(9)=7.01$, $p=n.s.$, as did a 4 (age) x 4 (non-dating respondents' descriptions of a "worst" date) chi square, $\chi^2(9)=9.14$, $p=n.s.$

Table 8

Descriptions of "Worst" Date and Partner's Behaviour on "Worst"
Date by Daters and Non-Daters⁶

Description of "Worst" Date Daters n=50 Non-Daters n=23			Gender Male Female	
Daters	Being Ignored by Partner on Date	38%	50%	28%
Non-Daters	Being Ignored by Partner on Date	44%	36%	56%
Daters	Fighting Verbally with Partner	26%	27%	25%
Non-Daters	Getting Dumped on the Date	26%	29%	22%
Daters	No Conversation with Date	18%	09%	25%
Non-Daters	Being Used (transportation, sex)	17%	14%	22%
Daters	Partner is Arrogant/Conceited	18%	14%	21%
Non-Daters	Unattractive Partner	13%	21%	00%
Partner's Behaviour on "Worst" Date Daters n=48 Non-Daters n=23			Gender Male Female	
Daters	Partner Acts Like a Bitch/Asshole	44%	61%	28%
Non-Daters	Partner Ignores Me on Date	39%	54%	25%
Daters	Partner does not Communicate	30%	17%	40%
Non-Daters	Uses Me (transportation, sex)	26%	27%	25%
Daters	Partner Ignores Me on Date	19%	17%	20%
Non-Daters	Partner is Rude to Me & Others	22%	00%	42%
Daters	Partner Fights Verbally with Me	08%	04%	12%
Non-Daters	Partner Acts Like a Bitch/Asshole	13%	18%	08%

A 2 (gender) x 4 (dating respondents' descriptions of partner's behaviour on a "worst" date) chi square analysis did not indicate a significant effect of gender, $\chi^2(3)=6.37$, $p=n.s.$ Nonsignificant findings $\chi^2(3)=5.85$, $p=n.s.$ were obtained for the 2 (gender) x 4 (non-dating respondents' descriptions of partner's behaviour on a "worst" date) chi square analysis as

⁶Gender percentages are a function of the total number of males or females in that category.

well. A 4 (age) x 4 (dating respondents' descriptions of partner's behaviour on a "worst" date) chi square revealed no significant age differences, $\chi^2(9)=7.16$, $p=n.s.$, as did a 4 (age) x 4 (non-dating respondents' descriptions of partner's behaviour on a "worst" date) chi square analysis, $\chi^2(9)=10.60$, $p=n.s.$

Females, regardless of dating experience, more frequently described a "worst" date situation as one in which they fought with their date. In addition, an arrogant, uncommunicative, or rude partner defined their "worst" date. Males, however, reported that being dumped, and dating an unattractive or bitchy partner would make a "worst" date. Interestingly, both males and females reported that being used and ignored by their date would constitute a "worst" date.

In conclusion, for this sample of individuals, the experience of dating may be a factor which could impact adolescents' partner and dating priorities, but may not significantly alter the respondents' overall perceptions of dating. Age does not seem to have any bearing on participants' descriptions of "best" or "worst" dates, and their partners' behaviour on these dates, regardless of dating experience. Gender, however, does impact participants' perceptions of a "best" date and their partners' behaviour on these dates. Females tend to emphasize more emotional aspects of dating such as romance and partner communication and attentiveness, whereas males tend to support having fun and participation in sex-related activities.

Sources of Information about Dating. As expected, parents, peers, media, and sex education were reported by the participants in this study as serving as sources of information about dating. For each source of information, participants were asked to indicate the three most important components of information they had learned. Content analysis was conducted on this question in which recurrent themes were categorized and compiled across the information sources. Engage in safe sex (90%), say no to unwanted situations (87%), and don't give in to peer pressure (85%) were most frequently mentioned across all sources of information. In addition, a smaller percentage of participants reported being told to be a gentleman or lady (10%), to respect their partner (8%), and to wait until marriage for sexual intercourse (7%) by their parents. Similarly, a small proportion of participants learned to have fun on a date (10%), what to do on a date (5%), and to make sure that your date likes you and you like him/her from their peers (5%). Additional information provided by the media emphasized that adolescents should learn to choose a good-looking partner (18%) and have fun on a date (11%). The information learned from sex education classes and a teacher with whom one could discuss dating issues comfortably emphasized learning how to prevent AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (20%).

Participants were also asked to indicate how their mother and/or father responded to their questions about dating. Seventy-two respondents (Female=60%, Male=40%) reported asking their mothers, while only fifty-six respondents (Female=57%, Male=43%) asked their fathers about dating at one time or another. Mothers were reported to be open to the respondents' questions (43%) more often than fathers (28%). However, both parents

failed to respond to questions about dating for many of the respondents (Mothers, 42%, Fathers 71%). Where the remaining response of fathers was to become angry when asked questions about dating (29%), mothers suggested that they ask again, when the respondents were older (15%). As found earlier, the pattern of consultation for both parents implies that females are more inclined to ask both parents questions about dating than males; however, mothers appear to be the parent of choice for both sexes.

Similarly, participants were asked to indicate how their friends responded to their questions about dating. Seventy-six participants (Female=62%, Male=38%) responded, of whom 90% indicated that their friends are "very open" and that "they answer the questions to the best of their ability, because they want to help me." The remaining 10% indicated that their friends joke, tease, and laugh when they ask questions about dating. Once again, females reported speaking to their friends about dating more than did their male counterparts.

In addition, respondents were asked if there were any activities or behaviours that their friends do on dates in which they themselves would not participate. Of the 34 participants who responded, 85% indicated that their friends engaged in sexual relations on dates, and 15% reported that their friends consumed alcoholic beverages on dates.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate which television shows they watched most, the last three movies they had rented and the last three movies seen in a theatre. All television shows indicated were recorded and percentages calculated. The five most watched television shows by both males and females were Baywatch, Full House, Beverly Hills 90210,

Melrose Place, and Roseanne. The most watched rented and theatre movies ranged from family viewing and comedy to drama and action films. The movies were categorized according to their rating (XX, R, AA, PG, G) and the nature of the film (Comedy, Horror, Family, Action, Drama, Adult). An XX rating was given to pornographic films with graphic sexual activity, an R rating applied to films in which graphic nudity or extreme violence were depicted, AA ratings were given to films which involved violence and coarse language, a PG film may have contained some coarse language and content which was designed for individuals no younger than early adolescence. Finally, a G rating was given to films designed for young children such as cartoons or Disney Films.

Action films of an AA rating were the most commonly watched category of films followed by comedies, drama, and family films, regardless of age or gender. Only one male indicated renting pornographic material.

Interviews.

Five early (13-14 yrs) and five middle (15-16 yrs) adolescents (6 female, 4 male) were interviewed concerning the individual and relative impact of parents, peers, media, and education on their attitudes and perceptions of dating and sexuality. The data collection was organized around a number of evaluation questions including: How do you feel when people say that your friends' beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes influence your ideas of dating and dating experiences⁷, If you had a question about sex, who or where would you go to get

⁷This is the actual question that appears in Appendix B, however, this question was later modified to: Do you feel that you share the same beliefs and values about dating as your (parents, peers, etc.)

responses for each area of related questions was conducted. Respondents' age and gender were analyzed separately. The proportion of interviews scored by two independent raters was 20%. Inter-rater reliability for these data was 85%.

With regard to dating practices, each participant was asked to describe a first date and a third or fourth date. Five of the six female respondents indicated that a first date involved going out with their date in a group of friends. The remaining female and four male participants described a first date as going out alone with their date. On a third or fourth date, all ten participants agreed that they would go out to a movie, dinner, or dancing alone with their date.

Parents, peers, media, and sex education served as a source of information for many of the female participants. Parents served as a source of information for two of the six female participants as did peers for all six females. The media were also believed to be a source of information for the six female participants.

I watch two soap operas, and they give me information about sexual stuff, like through sexual shows and stuff (age 14).

I don't think that it gives you information about dating, but about sex...like they show you what happens. You can actually see what they do and how they do it (age 15).

Two females praised sex education as a source of information.

In our sex ed class we had to write down a question and we each got someone else's question and had to go answer it, like go to the library and figure it out. We also talked about dating and the good things and bad things in other people (age 13).

I think the sex ed classes have been well taught. Like they tell you about STD's and to set yourself limits--it is worthwhile (age 16).

However, none of the four male respondents credited any of the four sources as providing information about dating. In fact, contrary to our hypothesis that peers are the number one source of consultation for adolescents, all four of the male respondents did not consult their peers:

The guys would give you smart answers. They kind of joke around and ridicule or tease you if you ask a question (age 16).

We don't really talk about dating at school and in our group (age 14).

To determine which source of information was most valued by the adolescents, respondents were asked whom or what they would address if they had a pressing question about dating or sex. Consistent with the hypothesis that peers are the most important source of information, all six females agreed that they would talk to their friends.

I would probably feel more comfortable talking to my friends, so you can just laugh about it (age 15).

Um, well I guess I get a lot from them (peers) because some of them have had a lot

more experience in dating than I have, I turn to them and ask them questions and stuff like that (age 14).

The four males respondents would not ask their friends about dating for fear of ridicule or looking stupid.

My friends might say that I should know that stuff (dating) already (age 16).

I would feel dumb because I didn't know the answer and I would try to get to the answer with my own conclusions because I wouldn't want them to know that I didn't know the answer (age 14).

When asked where their friends get their information about dating, five female participants indicated other friends, three male respondents suggested experience, one female believed the media, and one male respondent suggested adult telephone sex numbers. These findings suggest that peers are a strong source of information about dating for female adolescents. However, males do not appear to seek out friends at all on this topic.

Each participant was asked if he/she believed that they shared the same beliefs, attitudes, and values as their parents, peers, the media, and sex education teachers. All ten participants felt that there were no similarities in values or attitudes between them and their parents, the media, or sex education teachers.

Parents

My parents were a lot more sexual than I think that I would be because I have heard a lot of stories about my mom's life and she is worried that I am going to be like her and that I am getting started in relationships too young, but I don't think I am like

them (Female, age 15).

I spend more time with my friends than my parents, so I think their attitudes influence me more than my parents...like sex, I am sure my parents are against sex before marriage, but my generation isn't into stuff like that (Male, age 15).

Media

They are all make believe shows, no one is for real (Male, age 16).

The shows are all too played out, everything goes exactly as it should and in real life it isn't like that (Female, age 15).

Sex Education Teachers

I think that they (teachers) are all so much older than us, they don't really understand us or dating now (Female, age 14).

I think they teach from their own experience and their knowledge is older and does not fit with today (Male, age 14).

However, all ten individuals believed that they shared the same attitudes, beliefs and values as their peers.

I know that people are right when they say that (sharing same values as friends) because I know peer pressure, and you want to do everything that your friends do (Female, age 14).

I think every one of my friends thinks the same (Male, age 13).

These results suggest that while males do not credit peers as a source of information about dating, they do identify with the values and attitudes of their peer group.

The role of sex education as a source of information about dating and sex was discussed by the majority of the participants. All ten participants did not find their sex education classes very stimulating for they already knew the information that was being taught.

We have heard all this stuff before through different sources (Female, age 14).

It is just a bunch of facts and figures and diagrams about plumbing that are thrown at you that you really don't want to learn about (Male, age 15).

There really is no information about dating in the sex ed class. They just tell us to wear protection when you do have sex to prevent STD's (Female, age 16).

In sum, sex education is acknowledged as a source of information for females; however, the information drawn from this source was limited. Several respondents suggested areas of improvement for the curriculum to enhance their knowledge acquisition.

I think I would like to learn more about relationships than about dating and safe sex and stuff like that because you get that through the media, all you see is commercials for condoms and it is being reinforced in school rather than the feelings that go with relationships and what a true relationship is and stuff (Male, age 15).

I would like to learn more about feelings that you have (Female, age 14).

Well what bothers me is my teacher gives her own opinions and I think it should be that we just learn about stuff because everyone has their own opinions. Like my teacher she asked the class who believed in abstinence and then said that the half of the class that believed in abstinence was the smart half of the class. I don't think

that is right, I mean, it is their choice (Female, age 15).

I think we need to spend a lot more time on actual sex sex. I already knew everything about condoms and stuff because we learned it in grades 7 & 8.

I don't think they realize that we are more experienced (Female, age 14).

I think they should talk more about sexual activities (like positions and stuff that I don't already know). Like I can't really go to a friend and ask them how long you should go out with someone before you have sex (Female, age 16).

Lastly, the relative impact of parents, peers, media, and school curricula was assessed through asking each participant which source was most reliable and which source gave them the information for both dating and sex. Five females believed that they would consult their friends for both dating and sex if they needed information. One female would discuss both topics with her boyfriend. The four males did not know where they would get their question answered; however, they did know that they would not go to their parents or their friends.

Interestingly, the most reliable source for getting information about dating or sex was parents for seven participants (4 male, 3 female), and the remaining three females choose their friends. This finding suggests that peers are the number one source of information, but that adolescents' confidence in their friends' responses is not strong.

DISCUSSION

The primary focus of the current study was to investigate the sources of early and middle adolescents' knowledge about dating, the perceived accuracy of the information they receive, and the value that they place on these sources of information. In general, it was expected that parents, peers, the media (television, music videos, rented and theatre films), and school (sex education curricula and teachers) would serve as sources of dating information. In addition, following from the work of Jesser (1978), and Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), gender differences were expected due to the differential socialization patterns for males and females.

The individual impact of the four information sources revealed a global trend whereby parents, peers, media, and sex education were rated as serving as sources of information about dating. From all the sources of information, respondents reported that they learned to engage in safe sex, say no to unwanted situations, and not to give in to peer pressure. Overall, when adolescents were asked to evaluate, individually, each of the sources of information, there were several gender differences. Females indicated that they received more dating information, that they thought this information was more accurate, that their choice of dating partner was more influenced, that they felt greater pressure to date, and that they shared similar values and attitudes about dating with the sources than did males. Interestingly, there were no age differences in the amount of dating information that participants received from each source, in the accuracy of this information, in the amount of influence on respondents' partner choice, in the amount of pressure that adolescents

perceived regarding whether or not they should date, and in the adolescents' perceived sharing of similar values and attitudes with each source. Although females rated the sources higher than males, overall, they did not identify all sources as highly. With respect to the amount of information provided by each source, females received more information than males from music videos. Females rated parents and television as more accurate sources of dating information than did males. Females also reported greater influence on their choice of dating partner from parents, peers, and television than did males. Lastly, there was some differential impact as a function of gender with females perceiving more pressure to date from peers and television than males, and a greater sharing of attitudes and values about dating than males with their peers. Based on these findings, it appears that females receive a greater amount of information about dating, place more value on this information, and report greater influence on their will to date and choice of dating partner from external sources, especially parents, peers, and television.

Males, however, did not report any significant impact of parents, peers, the media, and school on the amount or accuracy of dating information they received or on their will to date or partner choice. Interestingly, when the ten sources of information (parents, dating partners, dating behaviour, television, relatives, teachers, siblings, books, music, and peers) were compared relative to one another, the only significant findings were for male participants. Males ranked their dating partners' as a source of information that was easy to access, provided the most accurate information about dating, and provided the most comfort. This finding would suggest that males are restricted to learning about dating issues

through interaction with female dating partners and that this may be because females are perceived as a non-threatening source of information. The research of Millar and Millar (1988) and Hacker (1981) suggests this conclusion. These researchers found that participants responded differentially to same-sex and opposite sex friends. In same-sex relationships, males reported discomfort with expressing emotions and discussing intimate topics. In cross-sex friendships, however, males were more communicative about personal issues and emphasized emotional sharing. The findings of these researchers are also consistent with the interview data gathered in this study. Of the four males interviewed, all four respondents did not discuss dating with their same-sex peers for fear of being ridiculed or "looking stupid". These male participants did not want their friends to tease them for broaching the topic of dating and admitting that they did not know all the answers about dating and sexuality.

Another potential source of information about dating and sex, for adolescent males in particular, is pornography. Examination of respondents' exposure to three levels of pornographic videos (R-rated, adult, and X-Rated) revealed a higher consumption rate for males than for females regardless of age. This finding is consistent with that of Berger et al. (1973), who not only found that exposure to pornography begins in adolescence, but also found a higher usage of pornographic material by males than females. This finding is most disturbing when the unrealistic portrayals of sex and degrading depictions of females within the films are considered (Harris & Associates, 1986; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

Further examination of the individual impact of the four information sources revealed that mothers were the parent of choice with whom respondents could feel comfortable and receive open responses when discussing dating and sexuality issues for both male and female participants; however, females were much more likely to approach their mothers than were males. These gender differences in parent consultation are supported by Sorensen (1973), who found that over 70% of male adolescents did not communicate with their parents about dating and sex. Similarly, Haas (1979) found that 44% of adolescent boys and 54% of adolescent girls reported that they had attempted to talk openly with their parents about dating and sexuality issues but were often met with parental disapproval. These results imply that females are more inclined than males to address dating issues with parents despite the risk of parental disapproval.

The fact that mothers were the parent of choice for discussing dating issues for both males and females raises questions concerning the impact of fathers on adolescents' acquisition of dating information. It appears that many of the fathers in this sample did not give their adolescents the impression that they were open to discussion about dating issues. The fathers' image of being unapproachable may stem from traditional sex roles, whereby mothers are relationship- and communication-oriented and fathers are achievement-oriented (McCormick, 1979; McCormick et al, 1984).

It was expected that friends would be the source of information about dating that provided the most information and was most valued by early and middle adolescents due to the heightened importance of the peer group during this age period (Conger, 1984). This

expectation was not met. Peers were found to be a source of information about dating, but not rated as the source that provided the most information. In addition, this information was not considered very accurate by the participants. However, peers did serve as a significant influence on females' dating partner choice, and significantly more females than males indicated that they felt pressure to date from peers. Interestingly, peers were the only source of dating information with whom respondents reported sharing similar values and ideas about dating. Significantly, more females reported sharing similar values with their peers than did males.

It was also believed that younger adolescents would rate peers as a more important source of information about dating than older participants. Contrary to our expectations, early adolescents did not indicate that peers were a more valued source of information than did middle adolescents. This prediction was based on Wintre et al.'s (1988) research, which found that early adolescents' preferred familiar peers as consultants, especially for sensitive topic areas such as dating and sexuality. If the sample of early and middle participants had been larger, as in Wintre et al.'s study, there would have been a greater possibility of detecting age differences.

None of the participants in this sample actually considered sex education as a source of information about dating or as a valuable source of information. This may be a result of the school curriculum, whereby dating is not frequently discussed in these classes, or a result of the limited scope of information provided in these classes. In the interviews with the ten participants, all of the respondents indicated their disappointment with the sex

education curriculum. Consistent with the results of Maslach and Kerr's (1983) research, participants in this study strongly advocated a shift in emphasis from anatomy, AIDS, and pregnancy, to more positive aspects of human sexuality such as relationships, emotions, and sexual intercourse within a monogamous relationship. Further research is needed to assess the sex education needs of adolescents and to create a program with which young people can identify and which they can perceive as a strong source of knowledge about dating and sex issues.

An additional purpose of this study was to discover the dating practices of adolescents, and how they perceived "good" and "bad" dates. Early adolescent males reported more sexual experience than early adolescent females. However, the proportions were high for both 16 year old females' and 16 year old males' who reported sexual experiences. The finding that males report more sexual experience on average than females attests to the importance of sexual interaction for male adolescents. This finding is consistent with the dating males' emphasis on sex-related activities as making their "best" dates so good. This finding is also consistent with gender stereotypes, whereby men are "the initiators" of sexual activity and affirm their masculinity through sexual experience. Women, however, are "the restrictors" of sexual interaction in order to save a good "reputation" for marriage (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; McCormick, 1979; McCormick et al., 1984).

The higher proportion of females who reported sexual experiences is not as easily explained. It is suggested that this transition in sexual experience may be a result of peer influence on females' sexual behaviour (Miller & Fox, 1987; Harris & Associates, 1986).

Harris and Associates (1986) found that 73% of the females participating in a national poll named social pressures as the number one reason why they had not waited to participate in sexual intercourse, as opposed to 50% of males. This conclusion seems logical, based on our findings that the females in this study were more influenced by their peers to begin dating and in terms of dating partner choice. These data not only strongly suggest the importance of education for participants about peer pressure, sex, and the accuracy of information attained through peers about dating and sex, but also raise questions about the age at which sex education should be introduced to adolescents. The young people in this sample reported a surprisingly high level of sexual interaction at an early age. Perhaps with the integration of a comprehensive sex education curriculum at preadolescent age levels, young people will be better equipped to make responsible decisions about abstaining from or partaking in sexual activities.

Gender differences in perceptions of why one dates and what constitutes a "good date" and "bad date" were expected. Because empirical exploration of young adolescents' perceptions of what makes or breaks a date has not yet occurred, no formal predictions of age differences were made. Descriptions of respondents' "best" and "worst" dates revealed few overall differences with regard to varying levels of dating experience. The "best" dates revealed significant gender differences, such that females emphasized a romantic and talkative partner where males emphasized going out to public places and engaging in sex-related activities as making their "best" date so good. In other words, females tended to emphasize emotional aspects of dating, such as dating a romantic and caring partner, and

males tended to support having fun and engaging in sex-related activities. These findings support sex-role socialization theory, whereby men are socialized to be achievement-oriented in order to feel masculine, and women are encouraged to be emotional and value relationships (McCormick, 1979; McCormick, Brannigan, & LaPlante, 1984).

Jackson (1975) found that his adolescent population, regardless of their dating experience, perceived a date as one in which fun, recreational activities would occur. This sample, particularly males, also identified recreational activities as a "best" date. As expected, "worst" dates were described by the majority of dating and non-dating respondents as interactions that were not recreational or fun in nature. The adolescents tended to identify conflict situations (e.g., fighting with date), or partner behaviours (e.g., arrogant partner) as events that described a "worst" date. Both males and females described their "worst" dates in the same way. Participants descriptions of their dates' behaviour on "best" and "worst" dates, did not differ by age.

Contrary to our expectations, no age differences were found with regard to participants descriptions of "best" and "worst" dates. This finding contrasts with the results of Roscoe et al. (1987), who found that younger adolescents perceived dating as a recreational activity and that older adolescents perceived dating as a means of mate selection and companionship. These differences in findings may be a result of using younger participants in this study than those used by Roscoe et al. (1987). Our results suggest that early and middle adolescence serves as a maturational period, during which young people experiment on a recreational basis with the opposite sex to discover the desired qualities

required of a mate or companion. In addition, dating experience (dating or not dating) did not mediate early and middle adolescents' perceptions of "best" and "worst" dates.

Several areas of future research were identified. Firstly, males believed that dating partners were the most important and comfortable source of information about dating, in contrast to females. It is suggested that these gender differences may be a result of sex-role socialization. However, future research needs to address the gender differences behind the adolescents' choice of information sources. Secondly, many of the fathers in this sample did not give their adolescents the impression that they were open to discussion about dating issues. Fathers' images of being unapproachable may stem from traditional sex roles whereby mothers are relationship- and communication-oriented and fathers are achievement-oriented (McCormick et al., 1984). Research needs to address the issue of fathers as sources of information and the reasons behind adolescents' reluctance to approach fathers about dating and sexuality issues. Thirdly, peers did not appear to serve as strongly as a source of information about dating as was expected. Future research needs to address the potential lack of impact of peers in providing information about dating and sexuality. Lastly, it was found that younger males reported higher experience with sexual activity than females. However, 16 year old females reported similarly high experience with sexual intercourse as males. It is believed that this transition in gender differences may be a result of peer pressure (Harris & Associates, 1986; Miller & Fox, 1987). These findings, coupled with adolescents' reported pornography exposure and disappointment with current sex education programs, suggest the serious need for the development of education which will

interest teens and provide them with information they not only need, but want to learn about. Because many sex education programs fail to modify adolescents' behaviour, and because sexual interaction is a reality for adolescents, particularly middle and late adolescents, it is critical that research address these factors immediately to prevent pregnancy, disease, and unhealthy attitudes about dating relationships.

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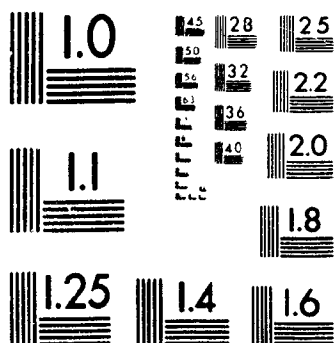
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2 of/de 2

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT DATING

In this section, you will be asked to give us some general information about yourself.

1. What is your age in years? _____
2. Are you male _____ or female _____?
3. Do you have any older brothers? Yes _____ No _____
4. Do you have any younger brothers? Yes _____ No _____
5. Do you have any older sisters? Yes _____ No _____
6. Do you have any younger sisters? Yes _____ No _____
7. If you answered yes to questions 3 and/or 4, do your brothers date? Yes _____ No _____
8. If you answered yes to questions 5 and/or 6, do your sisters date? Yes _____ No _____
9. Do you have a religious affiliation? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, with which religion are you affiliated?

10. Also, if yes, circle how religious you feel you are:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat religious		very religious

11. Are you Canadian? Yes _____ No _____
12. Do you have a cultural affiliation? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, which culture would you say you belong to?

13. Please indicate your mother's highest level of education:

☐ Grade 8 or less
☐ High school
☐ Community college
☐ University: please specify degree: _____

14. Please indicate your father's highest level of education:

____ Grade 8 or less

____ High school

____ Community college

____ University: please specify degree: _____

15.a) Does your mother work outside the home? Yes ____ No ____

Full-time ____ Part-time ____

b) Does your mother work inside the home? Yes ____ No ____

Full-time ____ Part-time ____

16. What is her primary occupation? _____

17.a) Does your father work outside the home? Yes ____ No ____

Full-time ____ Part-time ____

b) Does your father work inside the home? Yes ____ No ____

Full-time ____ Part-time ____

18. What is his primary occupation? _____

In this section, you will be asked questions about dating.

1. One of the first things we would like to know is how you would define a "date"?

I realize that not everyone defines "date" in the same way. Therefore, I will also provide you with my definition of a date. Please base your answers on the following definition of a date for the rest of the survey.

My definition of a date describes a couple who are in the initial stages of dating. Despite how long the couple has known one another, they have just started to see each other romantically (three times or less). The date usually involves just the two people, but may occur in groups of other couples (e.g. double date). The important factor is that there is a definite romantic interest between the two people, but no established relationship as of yet.

2. Please rate how close the definition provided above agrees with your personal definition of what a date is:

1	2	3	4	5
no agreement		some agreement		exact match

Despite how closely your definition of a date matches the one above, please answer all of the following questions based on the definition we have provided for you. Thank you.

3. In general, do you date (this does not mean that you have to be dating right now)?
Yes_____ No_____

If no, please turn to page 9.

If yes, turn to next page.

If you do date, please answer the following questions:

4. Please try and pinpoint the reason(s) you choose to date and describe your reasons in the space provided.

5. Are you dating someone right now? Yes _____ No _____

6. How many times last month did you date? _____

7. How many times this year have you dated? _____

8. Have you ever been involved in more than one dating relationship at a time?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes please specify, how many individuals on average do you date at one time _____

9. How often are your dates supervised by a parent or older individual?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

10. How often do you date with a group of other people (friends, sisters, brothers, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

11. How often do you date with another couple?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

12. How often do you go on dates alone with a partner?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

13. How long did your most recent dating relationship last? (if dating someone right now, indicate how long you have been dating this person)

Last relationship _____ (how long)
 Present relationship _____ (how long)

a) If presently dating a partner please indicate how attached you are to this person (circle the appropriate number)

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		some		very much

b) How much influence do your dating partners have on your life decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		some		very much

14. Does anyone influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes _____ No _____

a) If yes, who? _____

b) If yes, please rate how much influence this person has on your choice of dating partner:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none		moderate		very strong

In this section we are going to ask you to describe 2 dates that you have been on: your best date, and your worst date. We are interested in finding out more about the dating experiences of young people. We'd like to know about the things that happen on good and bad dates. What are the specific things that dating partners have done that made you evaluate a date as good or bad?

15. a) Describe the best date that you have had. What happened on this date that made it so good? (please be as detailed as possible)

b) Still thinking about your best date, please describe the setting and/or locale for the date. (please give as many details as possible)

c) Again, keeping in mind the best date that you have been on, please describe your dating partner's behaviour. What did she/he do on this date that made it so good? (please be as detailed as possible)

16. a) Describe the worst date that you have had. What happened on this date that made it so bad? (please be as detailed as possible)

b) Still thinking about your worst date, please describe the setting and/or locale for the date. (please give as many details as possible)

c) Again, keeping in mind the worst date that you have been on, please describe your dating partner's behaviour. What did she/he do on this date that made it so bad? (please be as detailed as possible)

17. Where do most of your first dates take place?

18. Considering where you would go for a first date, would you choose different places for second and third dates?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

If yes, where would your second and/or third dates take place?

If you indicated that at present you do not date, please answer the following questions, otherwise go to page 13:

4. There are many reasons why people choose not to date. Please try and pinpoint the reason(s) why you have made that choice.

5. If an opportunity arose where dating was an option would you date?
Yes_____ No_____ It Depends_____

6. If you answered "it depends", indicate what it would depend upon:

In this section we are going to ask you to describe what you think would make a best date and a worst date. We are interested in finding out more about your definition of good and bad dates. We'd like to know about the things that you would like to have happen on a good date and not like to have happen on a bad date. What are the specific things that dating partners can do that would make you evaluate a date as good or bad?

7.a) Describe a best date. What would happen on this date that would make it so good? (please be as detailed as possible)

b) Still thinking about a best date, please describe the setting and/or locale for the date. (please give as many details as possible)

c) Again, keeping in mind a best date, please describe your dating partner's behaviour. What would she/he do on this date that would make it so good? (please be as detailed as possible)

8.a) Describe the worst date that you could ever imagine. What would happen on this date that would make it so bad? (please be as detailed as possible)

b) Still thinking about a worst date, please describe the setting and/or locale for the date. (please give as many details as possible)

c) Again, keeping in mind a worst date, please describe your dating partner's behaviour. What would she/he do on this date that would make it so bad? (please be as detailed as possible)

9. Where would most of your first dates take place?

10. Considering where you would go for a first date, would you choose different places for second and third dates?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

If yes, where would your second and/or third dates take place?

Please answer the following questions regardless of your dating experience.

1. Have you ever engaged in kissing? Yes_____ No_____
2. Have you ever engaged in petting? Yes_____ No_____
3. Have you ever had sexual intercourse? Yes_____ No_____

In this section we will ask you some questions about your friends.

1. Do you discuss the topic of dating with your friends?

Yes_____ No_____

- a) If yes, how often do you and your friends talk about dating?
(please circle one)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

- b) Please describe below how you feel your friends respond to your questions?

2. How many of your friends date?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Less Than Half	Half	More Than Half	All

3. Compared to you, how often do your friends date?

1	2	3	4	5
A Lot Less Often	A Little Less Often	Same	A Little More Often	A Lot More Often

4. Are there any things that your friends do on dates that you do not do? Describe below.

5. Do your friends influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence your friend(s) have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

6. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as your friends?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Do you feel pressure to date from your friends?

Yes _____ No _____

8. Do you have one best friend? No _____ Yes _____

9. Do you have a number of best friends? No _____ Yes _____
If yes, how many? _____

10. How much information do you get about dating from your best friend(s)?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

11. How much information do you get about dating from your other friends.

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

12. How correct is the information that your best friend(s) give you about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

13. How correct is the information that your other friends give you about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

14. In the space below, please list the three most important things your friends have told you about dating.

15. In your family, do you have a mother_____ a father_____
both_____?

16. Do you discuss the topic of dating with your mother
Yes_____ No_____?

a) If yes, how often do you and your mother talk about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually

b) Please describe below how your mother responds to your questions?

17. Do you discuss the topic of dating with you father

Yes_____ No_____?

a) If yes, how often do you and your father talk about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually

b) Please describe below how your father responds to your questions?

18. Do your parents influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, please rate how much influence your parent(s) have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

19. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as your parents?

Yes_____ No_____

20. Do you feel pressure to date from your parents?

Yes_____ No_____

21. How much information do you get about dating from your parents?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

22. How correct is the information that your parents give you about dating? (circle)

1 2 3 4 5
 very correct somewhat correct not very correct

23. In the space below, please list the three most important things your mother/father has told you about dating.

24. Which parent would you feel most comfortable asking about dating?

Mother _____ Father _____ Both _____

25. Which parent would you feel most comfortable asking about sex issues?

Mother _____ Father _____ Both _____

26. How many hours a week do you watch television? _____

27. List below the three television shows that you watch most often.

28. Do any of the television shows that you watch have dating situations in them?

Yes _____ How many _____ No _____

29. Do any of the dating situations in these shows reflect dating situations that you or your friends have had?

1 2 3 4 5
 None A Little Some Most All

30. Are there any episodes from these television shows that you would use as a model for a good date? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please give a brief description of one episode below.

31. Do any of the television shows that you watch influence your choice of dating partner?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these television shows have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

32. Do any of these shows influence what you do on a date?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these television shows have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

33. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as the people depicted on television?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

34. Do you feel pressure to date from the television shows that you watch?
Yes _____ No _____

35. How much information do you get about dating from the television shows that you watch?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

36. How correct is the information that your favourite television shows give you about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

37. In the space below please list the three most important things that you learned about dating from the television shows that you watch.

38. How often do you rent movies each month? _____

39. List below the last 3 movies that you rented.

40. How many of these three movies did you select? _____

41. Did any of the three movies that you last rented have dating situations in them?

Yes _____ No _____

42. Did any of the dating situations in these movies reflect dating situations that you have had?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

43. Did any of the dating situations in these movies reflect dating situations that your friends have had?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

44. Are there any episodes from these movies that you would use as a model for a good date? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please give a brief description of one episode below.

45. Did any of the movies that you have rented influence your choice of dating partner? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these movies had:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

46. Did any of these movies influence what you do on a date? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these movies have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

47. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as the people in the movies that you rent?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

48. Do you feel pressure to date from the movies that you rent?

Yes _____ No _____

49. How much information do you get about dating from the movies that you rent?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

50. How correct is the information that you get about dating from the movies that you rent?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

51. In the space below please list the three most important things that you learned about dating from the movies that you rent.

52. How often do you watch movies at the theatre? _____

53. List below the last 3 movies you saw at a theatre.

54. Did any of the three movies that you last saw at a theatre have dating situations in them? Yes _____ No _____

55. Do any of the dating situations in these movies reflect dating situations that you or your friends have had?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

56. Are there any episodes from these movies that you would use as a model for a good date? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please give a brief description of one episode below.

57. Did any of the last three movies you saw at a theatre influence your choice of dating partner? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these movies had:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

58. Did any of these movies influence what you do on a date?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence these movies had:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

59. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as the people in the movies that you watch?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

60. Do you feel pressure to date from the movies that you watch?

Yes _____ No _____

61. How much information do you get about dating from the movies that you watch?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

62. How correct is the information that you get about dating from the movies that you watch?

1 2 3 4 5
 very correct somewhat correct not very correct

63. In the space below please list the three most important things that you learned about dating from the movies.

64a) Have you ever watched R rated movies?

Yes _____ How many _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

b) Would you like to see an R rated movie again, or for the first time?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

65a) Have you ever watched an adult video?

Yes _____ How many _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

b) Would you like to see an adult video again, or for the first time?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

66a) Have you ever watched a triple X movie?

Yes _____ How many _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

b) Would you like to see a triple X movie again, or for the first time?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

67. How many hours a week do you spend watching music videos? _____

68. How many hours a week do you spend listening to music? _____

69. Does the music that you listen to/music videos that you watch influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence music/music videos have:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

70. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as those expressed in the music that you listen to or the videos that you watch? Yes _____ No _____

71. Do you feel pressure from music/music videos to date?

Yes _____ No _____

72. How much information do you get about dating from your music/music videos?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

73. How correct is the information that music/music videos gives you about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

74. In the space below, please list the three most important things that you learned about dating from music/music videos.

75. How many hours have you spent in a sex education/health class this week _____
this month _____?

76. Have you ever discussed the topic of dating in your sex education class?

Yes _____ No _____

77. How often do you talk to your sex education teacher(s) about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually

78. Does the information that you learn in sex education classes influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence this information has:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

79. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as your sex education teacher(s)?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

80. Do you feel pressure to date because of your sex education class?

Yes _____ No _____

81. How much information do you get from your sex education class about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

82. How correct is the information that you get about dating in your sex education class?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

83. In the space below, please indicate the three most important things that you learned in your sex education class about dating.

84. How often do you talk to your other teachers about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually

85. Do you have a teacher that you feel comfortable talking to about dating?

Yes _____ No _____

86. Is this teacher that you feel comfortable talking to about dating also your sex education teacher? Yes _____ No _____

87. Does this teacher that you feel comfortable talking to about dating influence your choice of dating partner?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please rate how much influence this teacher has:

1	2	3	4	5
almost none	a small amount	moderate	strong	very strong

88. Do you feel that you share similar attitudes and feelings about dating as this teacher that you feel comfortable talking to about dating? Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

89. How much information do you get from this teacher that you feel comfortable talking to about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
None	A Little	Some	Most	All

90. How correct is this information that this teacher gives you about dating?

1	2	3	4	5
very correct		somewhat correct		not very correct

91. In the space below, please indicate the three most important things that this teacher that you feel comfortable talking to has told you about dating.

92. For the following items please order the items from 1 to 10 according to which gives you the most correct information about dating. (A value of 1 goes beside the source of information that is most correct and 10 goes beside the least correct source of information)

Parents _____
 Dating partners _____
 Dating Behaviour _____
 Television _____
 Relatives _____ Which relatives? _____
 Brothers/Sisters _____
 Teachers/School _____
 Books/Magazines _____
 Music/Music Videos _____
 Other (Identify) _____

93. For the following items please order the items from 1 to 10 according to which gives you the most information (quantity) about dating. (A value of 1 goes beside the source that gives you the most information and 10 goes beside the source of information that gives you the least information)

Parents _____
 Dating partners _____
 Dating Behaviour _____
 Television _____
 Relatives _____ Which relatives? _____
 Brothers/Sisters _____
 Teachers/School _____
 Books/Magazines _____
 Music/Music Videos _____
 Other (Identify) _____

94. For the following items please order the items from 1 to 10 according to which you feel most comfortable asking for information about dating. (A value of 1 goes beside the most comfortable source of information and 10 goes beside the least comfortable source of information)

Parents _____
 Dating partners _____
 Dating Behaviour _____
 Television _____
 Relatives _____ Which relatives? _____
 Brothers/Sisters _____
 Teachers/School _____
 Books/Magazines _____
 Music/Music Videos _____
 Other (Identify) _____

95. For the following items please order the items from 1 to 10 according to which you feel is the easiest to get a hold of to get information about dating. (A value of 1 goes beside the easiest source to get a hold of and 10 goes beside the hardest source to get a hold of)

Parents _____
 Dating partners _____
 Dating Behaviour _____
 Television _____
 Relatives _____ Which relatives? _____
 Brothers/Sisters _____
 Teachers/School _____
 Books/Magazines _____
 Music/Music Videos _____
 Other (Identify) _____

96. For the following items please order the items from 1 to 10 according to which source of information you feel your classmates use when they are dating. (A value of 1 goes beside the source of information that your classmates are most likely to use and 10 goes beside the sources of information that your classmates are most likely not to use)

Parents _____
 Dating partners _____
 Dating Behaviour _____
 Television _____
 Relatives _____ Which relatives? _____
 Brothers/Sisters _____
 Teachers/School _____
 Books/Magazines _____
 Music/Music Videos _____
 Other (Identify) _____

97. Do you value the information provided by your friends about dating over the information provided by your parents?

Yes _____ No _____ Equal Value _____

98. Do you value the information provided by your friends about dating over the information provided in school by your teachers?

Yes _____ No _____ Equal Value _____

99. Do you value the information provided by your friends about dating over the information provided by books, movies, music videos, and television?

Yes _____ No _____ Equal Value _____

Appendix B

Interview Schedule

DATING EXPERIENCE

-Please describe for me a first date? What would it look like?

Prompt--What would you do on this date, where would you go?

-Please describe for me a third or fourth date? What would it look like?

Prompt--What would you do on this date, where would you go?

PARENTS

-Can you tell me a bit about your parents as a source of information about dating in your life?

-How do you feel when people say that your parents' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge influence your ideas of dating and dating experiences?

-Tell me how your parents react to you dating or talking about it?

Prompt--Would you say that they are fairly open-minded about dating?

-How open are you with your parents about your dating activities?

Prompt--Do you tell them where you go or what you do? Why or why not?

PEERS

-Can you tell me a bit about your friends as a source of information about dating in your life?

-How do you feel when people say that your friends' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge influence your ideas of dating and dating experiences?

-Can you tell me where your friends get most of their dating information from?

MEDIA

-Can you tell me a bit about the movies/television/music videos that you watch as sources of information about dating in your life?

-How do you feel when people say that the beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge portrayed in the media influence your ideas of dating and dating experiences?

-Do you feel that the dating situations depicted on television or in the movies are realistic?

SCHOOL

-Can you tell me a bit about your sex education classes as a source of information about dating in your life?

-How do you feel when people say that the beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge portrayed in your sex ed classes influence your ideas of dating and dating experiences?

-Describe for me a typical sex education class in your school.

Prompt-Do you enjoy your sex education classes? Why or why not?

-Do you feel that your teachers understand dating the same way that you do?

GENERAL

-Please tell me where you would get information about dating or sex if you had a question?

-Who or what do you believe is the most reliable source of information about dating or sex that you could go to?